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JACOB VINER

PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS

POPULAR TRACTS.

LET us inquire! what mighty consequences are involved in these little words! whither have they not led! To what are they not destined to lead? Before them thrones have given way. Hierarchies have fallen, dungeons have disclosed their secrets. Iron bars, and iron laws, and more iron prejudices have given way; the prison house of the mind hath burst its fetters; science disclosed her treasures; truth her moral beauties; and civil liberty, sheathing her conquering sword, hath prepared to sit down in peace at the feet of knowledge.—*Popular Lectures, by Frances Wright.*

BY ROBERT DALE OWEN.

LONDON:

J. WATSON, 15, CITY ROAD, FINSBURY.

1841.

CONTENTS.

- Address on the Influence of the Clerical Profession.
A Tract and a Warning.
Truth and Error.
On the Fear of God.
- Address on the Hopes and Destinies of the Human Species.
- Address on Free Inquiry.
On Fear as a Motive of Action.
- Wealth and Misery.
- Prossimo's Experience.
On the Study of Theology.
Safest to Believe, or the Balance Struck.
- Darby and Susan. A Tale of Old England.
- Sermon on Loyalty.
Remonstrance to God.
Sermon on Free Inquiry.
Observations on Public Worship.
- Situations: Lawyers, Clergy, Physicians, Men and Women.
- Lecture on Consistency.
- Galileo and the Inquisition.
Effects of Missionary Labours.
Republican Government, and
National Education.

3882
37
375

(RECAP)

AN ADDRESS
ON
THE INFLUENCE
OF THE
CLERICAL PROFESSION.

AS DELIVERED IN
THE HALL OF SCIENCE NEW YORK.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,
A TRACT AND A WARNING ;
TRUTH AND ERROR ; ON THE FEAR OF GOD.

BY ROBERT DALE OWEN.

LONDON :
J. WATSON, 15, CITY ROAD, FINSBURY.
1840.

INFLUENCE OF THE CLERICAL PROFESSION.

THERE is no custom so strange, no observance so whimsical, but is rendered familiar to us by habit, or, it may be, is invested with the character of importance—even of imperious necessity, by reiteration.

In the South Sea Islands they pierce the central cartilage of the nose, and wear a cumbrous, dependant nose-jewel, without suspecting that any one could fail to admire it, as a most becoming and enviable ornament. The diminutive shoes of the Chinese females, stamping on the favoured few the impress at once of nobility and helplessness—very much like our own fashionable boarding-schools—are well known. In a particular district of Italy the inhabitants, so travellers tell us, take their produce to market in panniers placed upon mules: they hang a basket on *one* side the saddle, filling it with fruit, vegetables, or other produce, and balance on the other with stones. You would ask them, no doubt, why they did not fill a pannier on each side, instead of thus carrying a useless weight. They would tell you, that their fathers did so before them, and that their fathers were wise and good men; and they would probably add, that it showed little discretion or civility in a stranger to interfere with the long-established and venerated customs of other nations.

But then these are foolish Catholics. We, an enlightened people, have more sense. We thank God, we are not as other men, superstitious, ignorant, following on, like sheep, in the beaten tract of custom; or even as these Italians. Ay! so speaks the Pharisee within us; but the spirit of the Pharisee is a self-righteous and a lying spirit. It sees, so clearly and comfortably, the mote in its neighbour's eye, it never dreams of the beam in its own!

But our follies are not the less real because we happen to be blind to their existence. Let us laugh at the Italian marketers as we please; we, too, have our sacks of sand, which we carry about as we would valuable produce; and we, too, would be scandalised to hear a hint about its inutility. If we pay twenty millions a year for things unseen, our forefathers, Heaven rest their souls! paid the same before us; and shall we, their unworthy successors, set up our judgments against theirs, and impeach their wisdom, by presuming to discard ancient customs, which they, no doubt, had excellent reasons for adopting?

Yet, methinks, were a child brought up by his parents, in some remote island perhaps, in ignorance of our religious imaginings ; his creed, the creed of common sense ; his catechism, the catechism of earthly science ; were such a child, trained to observation more than to faith, to find himself at once in the midst of us ; were he to traverse our wide republic, to visit its bustling towns and its smiling villages—great would be his marvelling, and instructive his remarks.

The first civilized settlement he entered would supply subject for endless inquiries and reflections.

"That handsome, spacious building, with its arched windows and its lofty spire, what is it?" he would naturally ask.

"A church."

"What does that mean?"

"A house of God; that is, of a Great Being who shall have made the world and the sun and the planets, and have made us, and preserved our lives."

"Does God live in that church?"

"No. His residence, they say, is in the heavens."

"Among the stars and planets?"

"So it is believed."

"Why does he want a house there, then?"

"It is not for God to dwell in."

"Does he get any body to keep it for him?"

"No; no one lives in it."

"Then of what use is it?"

"Men meet there every seventh day, to praise and glorify God."

"Does God like that?"

"Men say he does."

"How do they know that? Have they ever been to see God and ask him?"

"No; but in every village there is a man who wears a black dress, and who tells them what God likes and what he does not like."

"And has that man with the black dress been to see God?"

"No."

"Does God tell him what he wants?"

"No."

"Then how can he tell the people whether God likes to be praised or not?"

"He has a book which, he says, God wrote."

"When?"

"A good many thousand years ago."

"What sort of book is it?"

"Like other books."

"How does he know God wrote it? Who saw God write it?"

"No one; but his father told him God wrote it."

"And who told his father?"

"His grandfather."

"And where did he learn it?"

"From his great grandfather, and he from his father, and so on."

"And are you sure that none of these people said what was not true?"

"No, I am not sure of that."

"How does the man in the black dress know that they all spoke the truth?"

"He does not know it."

"Then if God really likes to be praised, he should tell all men so plainly, instead of leaving people to guess whether he likes it or not; and then there would be no mistake about it. I don't understand why he does not tell us at once."

"Nor I."

"How do the people praise God, when they meet in that house?"

"They sing, and sometimes have an organ to accompany their voices."

"I should like that, if the music is good."

"Then the man in the black dress prays."

"What is that?"

"He speaks to God."

"What does he say to him?"

"He tells him that he is very great and very good and very merciful, and that without his protecting care we should instantly die."

"Does not God know all that already?"

"So men believe."

"Then what is the use of telling him?"

"I see none."

"What more does the man in black say?"

"He tells God that he and the congregation are miserable sinners; that all the thoughts of their hearts are only evil continually: that there is none among them that doeth good, no, not one."

"Is he telling the truth?"

"I think not."

"He must believe it to be the truth; for he surely would not tell God a lie."

"It is very natural, my child, that you should think so."

"But yet, I hope it is not true, for I should not like to live among miserable sinners, that never did good and were always thinking evil. Do they tell one another how bad they are?"

"Oh no; a man would be knocked down, if he were to do that."

"What! for speaking the truth?"

"They would say, in that case, that it was *not* the truth. They would deny that they were miserable sinners."

"Then the man with the black dress *does* tell God a lie, after all. I wonder the people don't knock him down, since that is the fashion here. Why don't they?"

"They have no objection to be called miserable sinners in church, by the man in the black dress ; but they have very great objections to be called so any where else, and by any other person. I cannot explain to you, my child, *why* this is, except that it is customary in this country."

"They have strange customs, then. But what more does the man in black say to God?"

"He asks him for food and clothing, and heavy crops and fine weather, and health and every other good thing, for himself and the congregation."

"Does God send them food and clothes?"

"Not unless they raise and prepare them."

"Then they might as well set to work, without saying a word to him about it."

"But they think that if God will help them, they can get along better."

"And will God forget to help them, unless the man in black reminds him what is to be done?"

"I believe they are afraid of it."

"But has the man that prays finer crops and better weather than his neighbour?"

"No."

"Is he ever sick?"

"Yes."

"Then God does not do as the man in the black dress bids him?"

"No ; very often not."

"And what do the people say when they see that their prayers are fruitless?"

"They say, God knows best what they ought to have ; let his will be done."

"But if God knows best, why do they plague him at all with their wants ? If the man in black does not know what God had best do, it is very foolish in him to talk to God about it. What does he do it for?"

"He receives a thousand, perhaps two thousand pounds a year."

"What! for talking to God?"

"Yes, and for preaching."

"What is preaching?"

"Telling men what they ought to believe and what they ought to do."

"Then he gives them lessons."

"Yes, you may call it so."

"Does he teach them mathematics and chemistry, and how to read and write?"

"No."

"Does he teach them how to plough and work a garden ? of does he make carpenters and blacksmiths of them?"

"No."

"Does he read ancient history to them, or tell them about the manners and customs of distant countries?"

"No."

"Well, what are his lessons about, then?"

"He tells them not to quarrel, or to lie, or to steal, or to murder."

"But, father, is he obliged to tell them that every week? I think it must be true what he tells God about their being desperately wicked. You don't require to tell me every week that I must not steal and murder. What more does he teach them?"

"The chief thing he teaches them is about heaven."

"A lesson in astronomy, is it?"

"Oh no."

"What then?"

"He tells them that they must believe the book he reads to them; and that they must pray just as he does; and that they must not dig or plough or amuse themselves on the first day of the week; and that they must always come to hear him preach."

"What is the use of all that?"

"He says, that if they do so, they will be taken to a good place called heaven; and that unless they do so, God will burn them in a great fiery lake."

"But how can that be—I never went to hear him preach, and God never burnt me?"

"But he means after they are dead."

"After they are dead! Then it won't signify. They can't feel after they are dead, even though God does burn them."

"He says, they will feel."

"Ah! that is very strange! but what does God burn them for? to make them better?"

"Oh no, they say he burns them for ever; and you know there is no time after *for ever* for them to get better in."

"Do they say that this burning hurts them?"

"Certainly; the book that men tell us God wrote says, there shall be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth; and that they shall cry out for a drop of water to cool their parched tongues, and God will not allow them any."

"But one thing I don't understand. What does God do all this for?"

"The man in black says, because God is angry unless you come to hear him preach, and do what he bids you."

"Does he say God is angry with me, and will burn me for ever, for that?"

"Yes."

"Does he think God is a very bad, wicked being?"

"No; a kind, merciful being; a loving Father, whose most distinguishing attribute is love; a benevolent Creator, whose tender mercies are over all his works!"

"Now you are joking, father!"

"No, my child, I am serious."

"And the man in black preaches all this?"

"Yes, every first day."

"And why don't the people get up and tell him that it is not true?"

"You think it is not true?"

"Think, father? one need not surely think long about it. If any person burns me when I do no harm, and without intending to make me better, and just because he is angry with me, of course he is a cruel, bad man; worse than the Roman emperor Nero, or any tyrant I ever read about. The people can't help seeing all this. Why don't they get up and say so to the man that preaches?"

"Many of them do not see it. They think the man in black knows more than they do, and that all he says is true, just because he says it. They call him a *clergyman*, and give him all he wants, and pay him great respect."

"But surely some of them see, that burning men and women without expecting to make them better, is not a merciful thing, or a good thing, and that none but a bad man or a bad God would do it."

"Yes, some see this; but they are afraid to tell the clergyman so."

"Are they? Then let us stay here till first day. I am not afraid. I will tell him so."

"My child, they will not allow you to speak in church."

"Why not?"

"Nobody but a clergyman may speak there."

"Why?"

"It is the custom."

"Is it not a bad custom? I am sure I'm very much obliged to any one that sets me right. Does not the clergyman like to be set right?"

"No, he does not."

"Then he must have been very ill brought up. Every good person likes to be set right when he's wrong. But I can go and speak to him at his house. I may speak there, may I not?"

"Yes, but it will be useless."

"I can convince him, father, I am sure I can. You shall see."

"My child, you are inexperienced. You have seen little of the world. You do not know how clergymen are situated. Unless they say what they do say, and unless they prevent people from replying to them as you wish to do, and unless they can get men and women to believe all they say, the people will not give them a thousand or two thousand pounds a year."

"Well, father, they need not talk to God, if they become convinced it is useless. They may work at something else."

"They do not know how."

"They can learn. I'll show the man in black how to split rails and to plough."

"But it is easier to talk to God and to preach."

"And so clergymen tell the people what is not true, because that is the easiest way of getting money to live?"

"Some do so, because they do not see that it is not true; and some because they like two thousand pounds a year without working."

"Oh! father, how glad I am that I am not a clergyman!"

"You have reason to be so, my child. No man is in a more melancholy situation than he who can only get a living by being deceived or by being a deceiver."

"Are there many clergymen in this country?"

"Yes; more than twenty thousand."

"And do they all preach the same thing?"

"No; they almost all say that a good God will burn men and women after they are dead; but some say he will burn them for one thing, and some for another. Each congregation usually believes its own clergyman; and, what is a great pity, they often quarrel with those who believe some other clergyman, and think them bad people, and will scarcely speak to them or sit in the same room with them."

"How glad I am that I never lived in a country where there were twenty thousand clergymen!"

He whom Christians profess to venerate shall have said, that we may learn of children what is hidden from the self-styled wise and prudent. Truly, I think so. Did we but permit their minds to acquire their natural strength, ere we burdened their imagination with mysteries, or tortured their understandings with dogmas, their simple questions might alone suffice to open our eyes on a thousand follies and evils, which our own adult perceptions, warped by early prejudice and dulled by daily custom, either fail to detect at all, or have forgotten strictly to notice and justly to appreciate.

Among these follies and evils, I see not one more pregnant with mischief, not one more inimical to morality, not one more fatal alike to truth and to intellectual freedom, or more subversive of peace and good fellowship among men, than the institution of the clerical profession—the setting aside an order privileged to interpret the will of a God, and commissioned to turn men's thoughts from earth to heaven.

I have no religion; that is, my reason assents to the spiritual creed of no sect; I have not accustomed myself to personify a first cause: I embody no superhuman spirits, angelic or infernal; I acknowledge the infallibility of no book, and the accuracy of no preternatural conceptions. If I dream of any thing unearthly, I keep my dreams to myself. And I think all men and women would enjoy more of habitual serenity and permanent happiness, if *all* theological imaginings were discarded.

But now,—I pray your attention to the remark,—though I have no religion myself, and could wish others free from it, yet I think

a mild religion, *in itself*, comparatively innocent. Men and women may dream of what passes in the skies, if they dream quietly at home, without doing much harm. In their closets they may embody natural powers, and personify chemical agencies; and if the conception be unsustained, it may be inoffensive also. In their hours of contemplation, they may imagine a heavenly Father looking down, with eyes of love, on this world of his, caring for its inhabitants, scattering over it the blessings we enjoy, and tempering its ills and miseries. To their glowing imaginations the breeze of spring may be God's genial breath, the sun of summer his cheering influence, and the wealth of autumn his rich gift. They may quietly repose in the conviction of his guardianship, and lie down at night the securer in the belief that God's eye slumbers not, but wakes and watches over them. They may picture forth, in infinite space, a bright and beautiful paradise; a haven of rest from earthly tempests, and a place of re-union for departing friends; and in the hour of despondency and bereavement, when natural comforts are without value, and the ear is deaf to friendship's words of rational consolation, they may derive an exciting comfort from fancy's forthshadowings.

There is, to be sure, the reverse of the picture. There are fears as well as hopes, depression succeeding to excitement, demons contrasting with gods, a hell below to balance a heaven above.

But still, such a religion may be conceived to grow up in the heart, and leave untouched its affections and its virtues. It may be supposed to teach no intolerance, to foster little spiritual pride, and scarcely to produce separation among mankind. Men and women might repeat to each other their ghostly dreams as they would any others, to amuse a wayward fancy, or while away an idle hour; and might learn to rest satisfied, even though others dreamed less often or less vividly than themselves.

But the PRIEST steps in; and the whole scene is changed. Religion is no longer a private, but a public matter. Dreaming is made a business of, and an excellent business, too. People may no longer dream or not dream as they please. The priest has to see to it that they *do* dream, and that they dream just so, and no otherwise, than as all good citizens should. There must be no such thing as a sound sleeper. All, unless they choose to be called unsound men, must have their visions once a week at any rate, and must make a public profession of them, for the good of others. If they are so perverse and refractory as not to dream when they are bid, and as they are bid, then the law is appealed to, or public opinion is suborned, to force or to frown the heretic into a regular, decent course of dreaming.

Then comes the season of test-oaths, and edicts of conformity and spiritual bedsteads. Men look round on each other with doubt and suspicion. The priest, with pencil dipped alternately in gaudy colours and in brimstone, sets about painting the stand-

ard dream, the regular legitimate vision which all men must have; and then he sets it up, and tells his fellow-mortals, "These be your visions, oh Christians! that shall bring you out of the land of sin, and from the pit of damnation. Fall down, and dream them."

And if any man will not fall down, they set the mark of Cain on his forehead. They annoy him here; they abandon him to the devil hereafter.

Then is past the innocence of religion. The serpent is in imagination's garden. The deadly fruit of intolerance is eaten, and men are chased from out the fair Eden of peace and liberty, into a world of schisms, of heartburnings, and of violence.

The angel that guards, as with a flaming sword, that lost paradise, is the PRIEST.

I wish, from my soul, I could see this to be otherwise. Most gladly would I recognize in the clergy, as a body, the heralds of peace and good will among men. Joyfully would I believe, that the millions they drain from men's pockets, and the hours and days they abstract from earthly industry, are spent to some profit. But I cannot. Stubborn truth is there, and I cannot shut my ears to her voice.

Do you ask me what the proofs are, and where to be found, that substantiate my accusation? Where to be found? Wherever a temple is raised to an unknown God, or a hierophant installed therein to officiate. Where to be found? In every country under heaven: in America, in Europe, in distant India, in the blooming South Sea Islands, on the desert shore of Greenland; where the cross is raised, or the crescent glitters; where Juggernaut's car rolls over the prostrate devotee, or Siberia's conjuror chaunts his mystical incantation. In all countries, in all ages; far back to the earliest whispers of history, and down to the very hour in which I speak. Where to be found? Wherever a priest is or has been; for there have been quarrels, there have been heart-burnings, there have been persecutions, there has flowed human blood. Do ye know one institution of character so infernal, of machinations so mysteriously horrible, as the Inquisition? It was founded by priests. Have ye ever read of a human folly to match that folly of a hemisphere, the Crusades? Its millions of victims were roused and sent forth to the slaughter—by priests. Look through history, from the time when Moses commanded the Midianite massacre—that hydra-barbarity whose single atrocity outweighs the accumulated iniquities of a modern world—look through history's tales of crime and blood, and mark how often the priest has assisted at each human sacrifice. Read of Socrates poisoned for atheism, and Aristotle banished for unbelief. Read of Jesus, admired and followed by the people, persecuted and slain by priests; of Galileo, compelled to belie his own noble discovery, and to swear that the earth stood still—by priests. Trace the history of the See of Rome, from its first aristocratic departure from primitive simplicity, throughout its hey-day of pride and

pomp and priestly power; when kings stood bare-footed suppliants before the ecclesiastical gate, and emperors bowed their heads before the steps of the spiritual throne; when the fulminating thunders of the Vatican pealed like the angry voice of an incensed Deity, and excommunicated nations mourned, in tears of terror and robes of sackcloth, the blighting curse of God's vicergerent; when Europe's armed millions were but the playthings of an Italian pontiff, and half the world trembled at the nod of a monk. And note the doings of that iron tyranny which bowed body and soul before it. See it enter, unchallenged, the domestic sanctuary, there to plant the accursed seeds of intolerance and hate. See the suspected heretic dragged from the embrace of affection to a dungeon, that shall be his dwelling and his grave; a dwelling whose eternal gloom was never visited by the bland light of heaven; a grave that yawns in secret, that closes in silence. Or if individual cases seem less worthy of attention, ye may have wholesale massacres; ye may read of the blood that flowed in Piedmont's valleys, until scarce a poor remnant of the inoffensive Waldenses remained, to attest the red record of their nation's extermination! Ye may recall the sights and sounds of horror that awoke the Huguenots of Paris on St. Bartholomew's fatal night! Or ye may follow the exterminating Pizarro over South America's reeking plains, and see the priest, ever at his side, raising the holy cross over human hecatombs, and blessing the weapons steeped in pagan gore!

And if Protestants disclaim this spirit of vice and violence, as the spirit of Anti-christ and Catholicism alone, and declare that they and their leaders are guiltless of any such, then let them read of Luther, asserting, that heretics "should be shut up in prison and put under restraint as madmen," that "Jewish synagogues should be levelled with the ground, their houses destroyed, their Talmud taken from them, and their Rabbis banished"—(I quote literally from Luther's "*State of the Popish Church*:"') or let them hear of Calvin, first burning Servetus, and then justifying the deed, in a work, the title page of which reads thus: "A Declaration for maintaining the True Faith held by all Christians concerning the Trinity of Persons in one only God; by John Calvin, against the detestable Errors of Michael Servetus, a Spaniard: in which it is also proved, *that it is lawful to punish heretics, and that this wretch was justly executed in the city of Geneva.* Printed at Geneva, 1554." Or peruse the same Swiss reformer's letter to the high chamberlain of the King of Navarre, in which he furnishes poor evidence that the Protestant priest was milder than his Catholic predecessors. "Above all," says Calvin in that letter—"above all, do not fail to rid the country of those zealous scoundrels who stir up the people to revolt against us. *Such monsters should be exterminated, as I have exterminated Michael Servetus the Spaniard!*"

But I weary you with unnecessary details. The story of priest-

craft and its encroachments blots every page of the world's history; and fully to illustrate the one we should have to quote the other entire.

Instead therefore of further pursuing so Herculean a task, let us look around on the modern world. Let us note how, in reforming England at this day, the priest struggles against the spirit of the age, clinging to his tythes and his benefices, and crying aloud against every innovation; just as his brother of France stood by the weak despot whose power is now no more; encouraging Charles the Tenth, with masses and homilies, in his mad contempt of a nation's wants and wishes; and just as his brother of Spain at this moment blushes not to prop up, with his saintly influence, the tottering throne of the infamous Miguel.

But why wander to other countries in search of testimony regarding the priest and his character and his conduct? It is to be found in superabundance at home. Most emphatically is it to be found in those daily doings—not of religion if you will—but of what passes current under the name; I allude to those hotbeds of religion, revivals, four-day meetings, anxious meetings, and I know not by how many other terms the scenes of spiritual intemperance are called; those mad scenes of unearthly excitement where men lose their time and their money, and women, alas! their senses; where the spirit of ghostly infatuation presides over the assembled crowd, and the mad orgies are continued, until groans of terror or shrieks of insensate exultation proclaim the final victory over reason and common sense; those scenes which the wise witness with a sigh of pity or a smile of contempt; while woman's quick affections and childhood's credulous innocence are wrought up to a pitch of enthusiasm that verges upon—nay, that sometimes terminates in—idiocy—hopeless, confirmed insanity.

Shall we be told that these are the doings of spiritual quacks, not of regular ecclesiastical physicians? Be it so! There lacks not evidence enough to designate the character of these latter also. It is to be found even at our doors. This very hall supplies it.

What is the priest's business and what is ours? Our business has never been concealed nor our principles glossed over. We established ourselves here, to defend truth however heterodox, to examine prejudices however inveterate, and to expose abuses however backed by wealth or sanctioned by antiquity. The priest's business is to support the creeds that be, to put down heresy, to root out unbelief.

We pitched our tents in this city, chiefly because here the clerical profession was the most numerous, its resources the most concentrated, its influence the most overruling. We saw it subtracting millions from the wages of industry. We saw it bringing not peace on earth, but a sword; estranging the hearts of the great family of mankind, retarding science by superstitious scruples, depressing honesty by religious tests. We cast our influence,

therefore, into the opposite scale. We resisted the efforts of the clergy; opposed their plans, freely inquired into their pretensions, freely exhibited their fallacy. And—be our opponents themselves my witnesses—we have not drawn one unfair weapon, nor struck one unmanly blow, in the contest. Be the clergy my witnesses, that if we have asserted much, we have insinuated nothing; we have dealt hardly with creeds and principles, never with men. We have assailed no reputation, traduced no private character, slandered not the good fame even of one, the bitterest of our opponents.

Then, too, what proposal that honesty could dictate or a love of truth suggest, has not, by turns, been made to them? Has not our hall been opened, week after week, and they, night after night, invited to attend? Nay, have we not publicly offered, if our spiritual physicians scrupled to enter the meeting-place of those whom they denounce as spiritually sick, to go to them to be cured, if they knew how to cure us?

And how, during all this time, have the clergy borne themselves? While we, free in the strength of a good cause, have on all occasions excited inquiry, and all but provoked discussion; have not they, shackled it would seem in the consciousness of a bad one, feebly kept silence, or unworthily replied with abuse? Have not they indulged in invidious personalities which dishonour their cause without advancing its permanent interests? And for honest defence, for fair unshrinking opposition, for friendly endeavours to convert or reform us, when have they offered all or any of these?

I impeach the clergy of a breach of trust. What are they paid for, if not to stand in the breach when the church's infallibility is besieged and her soldiers won over to scepticism? They cry out incessantly about the attacks we have made, and the breaches we are effecting. They noisily lament, that twenty thousand persons in this city of New York alone, have forsaken the truth, to follow after a delusion. They see, that here, night after night, hundreds flock together to listen to what they are pleased to call the word of perdition. They know, or ought to know, that here the advocate of orthodoxy is treated with courtesy—nay, with indulgence. Yet with one single occasional exception not one of the church's hired servants ventures into the arena. All, while they confess the danger, shrink from the encounter. They call for thousands after thousands of pounds to stop the opening of the floodgates of infidelity; but here, where the floodgates are opened, not one of them is to be seen. While with laboured ostentation they proclaim aloud their missionary efforts to convert the Hottentot and the New Zealander, here at their very doors they sit still and look on, and suffer heresy to proceed unchallenged, and to exhibit her arguments without refutation. I impeach the clergy of this city therefore, of a breach of duty.

It was their *duty* to be found here among us—to defend, from this spot, their Scripture and its doctrines; to utter in your ears, and for your benefit, the arguments they idly repeat to others, who have already “got religion,” and therefore need them not. It was their *duty* to save, if human efforts could save, your souls, my soul, the souls of all sinners and heretics, (so called) that ever entered these walls. Our souls are as valuable, surely, as a Hottentot’s; our creed is, at the least, as infectious as theirs. It is a mere affectation of zeal, therefore, to take passage for the Cape of Good Hope, and leave unattacked the Devil’s strong hold, (so they nickname it) within a stone’s cast of their own pulpits.

Such conduct evidences a lack of boldness or of honesty. It brings into view a craft that has neither plain dealing, generosity, good temper, good courage, nor any of the nobler virtues to recommend it. “By their deeds ye shall know men,” said the reformer of Nazareth. By its deeds do we indeed know—and most disadvantageously do we know—priestcraft.

In every thing I have now brought forward, I desire to be distinctly understood as speaking of the clergy in their professional, not in their private, character. It is their *business* to regulate creeds, and creeds ought never to be regulated. It is their *business* to interfere in private opinions, and there ought to be no such interference. It is their *business* to see that men never change their creeds, right or wrong; and men ought to change them the moment they are convinced of their error. In a word, it is the clergy’s business to do just what ought never to be done.

The wealth of the Indies would not tempt me to place a child of mine in a situation so vitiating as this. The best dispositions and worthiest hearts in the world cannot be subjected, with impunity, to its continually recurring temptations. Instead, therefore, of joining any hue and cry against the clergy for being as they are, I think it is much to the credit of human nature that they are no worse—that private virtues and moral excellence are still to be found among them. If any class of men ever deserved indulgence, on account of the temptations to evil that surround them, the clergy are that class.

True it is that the very influence of the priesthood has placed in the way of every man and woman a portion of the temptations which so forcibly assail themselves. There exists for all, laymen or clergymen, a certain premium on orthodoxy; that is, a premium on all opinions and customs that are generally received. Favour, patronage, popularity, riches—all these are so many prizes which public opinion offers as the reward of conformity.

But if all men are thus tempted in the degree, the clergy are so in the extreme. They have been trained as the servants and supporters of a religious system. As its servants and supporters they win a livelihood, and most of them have learned no other profession

With their faith, therefore, they lose also their livelihood, unless they will consent to act the hypocrite. At the moment they become converts, they become beggars also; unless they will resolve to begin the world again, and learn to labour for their support. Their profession and its emoluments are their only property; and they cannot become honest sceptics, except under penalty of its confiscation.

How immoral, how vitiating is such a situation! How filled with temptations to evil, and inducements to dishonesty! What sacrifices does it require of him who may chance to see beyond the creed of his forefathers, and who has not learned to say what he does not think! How richly it rewards hypocrisy! and how heavily it clogs the wheels of improvement!

What should be said to such a law as this: "*Whoever shall dissent from the popular creed, and shall openly express such dissent, the whole of his property shall immediately be confiscated; he shall be forbidden from following his trade, and a vote of public censure shall be passed upon him*"? How would our feelings revolt from such injustice! How should we denounce and detest it, as republicans—as men! Yet such injustice as this is practised daily by our free republic towards one oppressed class of her citizens, the clergy. I say oppressed, not by any means in jest or irony, but in sad sincerity and sober truth. I say oppressed, because I most conscientiously believe the clergy to be so; oppressed by their situation; oppressed by its temptations; and grievously oppressed by the penalties that attach to an honest change of belief.

It is indeed true, that a clergyman, if he cease to be religious and cease to profess religion, may follow some other profession; and, if he be fortunate, may save himself from penury. But so may any other malefactor, whose property has been confiscated. He also may labour and gain more. There is but little mercy in such an alternative as that.

I know that the clergy do not consider themselves oppressed, and are seldom considered so by others: but it is not necessary to oppression, that its victims should know or appreciate their situation. For myself, no earthly consideration should induce me so to place myself, that I should be richly rewarded so long as I retained my present opinions, and that I should be punished with confiscation of property and loss of livelihood, if ever I saw cause to change them. And surely any man who values his liberty and his rights will agree with me in the opinion.

I have known several instances, both in this country and in Great Britain, of clergymen, who were clear-sighted enough to perceive the errors they had been trained to preach, and honest enough to cease preaching them. I particularly recollect one instance in England. It is that of a pastor, who was universally beloved for his amiable qualities, and universally respected and admired for his talents and eloquence. He became

converted to heterodoxy ; stated from the pulpit that he was so ; threw up a large salary ; and retired to spend the rest of his days in obscurity and poverty, followed by the blessings and regrets of all who knew him. The circumstance did not become generally known, for his brethren of the church hushed it up ; and I learned it by accident from a gentleman who was personally acquainted with him.

Another similar instance of conscientiousness came to my knowledge while residing, about three years since, in the western country. An individual with whom I had previously scarcely any acquaintance, called on me to express the pleasure with which he had perused some remarks relative to the subject now under consideration. He had himself, he said, been a clergyman, belonging to the Baptist persuasion, in which capacity he had descended the Ohio with his family in the year 1819, and settled on the Mississippi. There he found a considerable congregation, who were perfectly satisfied under his ministry ; but he also found a good many sceptics. One of these, with whom he lived on friendly terms, requested him to peruse Volney's Ruins. He did so, and the perusal furnished him much subject for meditation. A severe illness which attacked him at the time and continued for many months, afforded him still more leisure for reflection. He pondered, and doubted, and found at last that his former creed, in which he had till then been a most sincere and zealous believer, no longer carried conviction to his mind. He recovered sufficiently to be able to preach ; and he did preach several times ; but when he stood up, he felt, as he told me, self-convicted, and had no heart to go on. Accordingly he determined to abandon a profession which he could no longer conscientiously follow, and to support his family by the labour of his hands.

There were domestic circumstances of no ordinary nature to deter him from the attempt. Out of four children two had been born blind and one was a cripple. But he was not discouraged. The state of his health afforded a plausible reason for a change of residence ; for, as he said, he could not bear to live as an unbeliever among those who had once looked up to him as their religious head. He emigrated to a southern state ; and, instead of preaching sermons, occupied himself in raising corn.

The world has since gone hard with him, and at this moment he has little except his own industry upon which to depend. He has been offered a situation as pastor in his native state, with a salary of eight hundred dollars a year ; for he was very popular. But never for one moment, he said, had he been tempted to accept the offer, nor induced to regret the course he had pursued.

I take pleasure in recording such instances as these of generous conscientiousness under trying circumstances. They draw one closer to one's fellow-creatures. But let us ever bear in mind, that conduct like this is not more noble than it is rare. It were

unreasonable to expect it from the mass of mankind ; because experience tells us, that our expectations would be disappointed. If society *will* tempt her members, she must bear the consequence. If she *will* offer a reward for hypocrisy, and enact punishments for honesty, she must expect to find rogues and hypocrites. Who shall sow the seed, and then wonder that the grain springs up ?

I perceive no remedy for these errors, so long as it shall be considered a trade to support the orthodox creed. But I do not perceive the necessity nor the advantage of such a trade.

Some day or other the world will see it abolished. How soon, time and circumstances can alone determine. I have laboured—and while health and conviction remain to me, I will labour—by exhibiting its worse than inutility, to hasten its abolition. Let those who think with me, aid in this righteous endeavour. But in doing so, let us ever bear in mind,—(and if this be the last sentiment I shall ever utter from the spot on which I now stand, it is not the least important I have thence expressed)—let us, my friends and fellow-citizens, ever bear in mind, that it is *priestcraft*, not *priests*, we are opposing ; and, while we resist with unflinching fortitude the *system*, let us regard with forgiving charity the *men*.

A TRACT AND A WARNING.

BY ROBERT DALE OWEN.

I received the following letter through the Post Office.

“ Please accept this small tract, as coming from one who has fears of your eternal destiny ; please to read it attentively, and should you feel inclined to make any remarks in your ‘Infidel’ paper, you are at liberty so to do. But, remember ! there *will* be a day, when you will regret that you ever turned a deaf ear to those warnings which are contained in that blessed book ‘the Bible.’ I wait an answer in the next number of your paper.

“A. M. Z.”

In this letter I found enclosed a small tract, published by the American Tract Society, and entitled “Quench not the Spirit.” I suppose A. M. Z. thought it very applicable to my case. Its commencement reads as follows :

"QUENCH NOT THE SPIRIT.

"My children,' said the old man, 'the words of your dying father will be few. I wish them to sink deep into your hearts.' Then raising himself a little in his bed, with a degree of strength which he had not been able to command for several of the last weeks of his sickness, he proceeded :

"When young, I enjoyed religious privileges, and was the subject of occasional serious reflection. When just entering my sixteenth year, religious impressions were made on my mind with unusual force. I seemed to hear a voice continually saying to me, *Seek religion now*. I was unhappy; my former amusements lost their relish. Still I was not willing wholly to relinquish them, and obey the voice which urged me to seek religion immediately. One day, after much reflection, I deliberately promised to God, that, as soon as the season of youthful amusement was past, I would give myself to religious pursuits. My anxieties immediately left me; I returned to my amusements, and the whole subject was soon forgotten.

"When at twenty-five, the monitory voice returned, reminded me of my promise, and again pressed upon me the importance of eternal things. Though I had not thought of my promise for years, I acknowledged its obligations, but an immediate fulfilment seemed more impracticable than it did nine years before. I vowed, with increased solemnity, that, when the cares of a rising family should subside, I would certainly attend to the concerns of religion.

"Again I applied myself to worldly avocations, and soon buried all thoughts of the admonition I had received. At fifty, when you, my children, were diminishing instead of increasing my cares, this heavenly monitor returned. "*Fulfil your promises, seek religion now,*" was continually pressing upon my mind. I knew that I had made such a promise, but I felt dissatisfied that its fulfilment should be claimed so soon. I regretted that I had not attended to the subject before, when I could have done it with less difficulty; but such was the extent and pressure of my business, that to do it then seemed impossible. The subject made me unhappy, and, after much deliberation, I sought relief to my troubled feelings by most solemnly renewing my promise to God. I said, when the pressure of my business is past, I will devote my whole attention to a preparation for eternity.

"No sooner had I fixed my mind on this course than my anxieties left me—the strivings of the Spirit ceased in my bosom, and ceased for ever! When sickness warned me of approaching death, I sought to fix my feelings on this subject, but it was in vain. There was a gloom and terror drawn around religion, at which my soul shuddered. I felt that I was forsaken of God, but it did not move me. I had no love to God, no repentance for sin, nor wish to forsake it. I felt nothing but the sullen gloom of despair: I knew I was in the hands of a justly offended God, from

whom I expected no mercy, and could ask none. With these feelings I am now about to enter the eternal world. To you, my children, I can only say, Profit by my example—quench not the Spirit—seek religion now, if you would avoid a miserable eternity—put not off the concerns of your soul till’—The sentence died upon his lips; his strength, which had been all summoned to make this last effort, suddenly failed, he fell back upon his bed, and with a groan that seemed to speak the pains of another world, the immortal spirit took its flight from that body which it had inhabited nearly fourscore years, to receive according to that it had done.”

I think it very likely that A. M. Z. is sincere in his desire to save my soul. But if he be, he has greatly mistaken the state of the case. His inferred opinion, that I have hitherto “quenched the spirit,” and that I have from year to year neglected a warning voice which bids me “seek religion now,” is really and truly unfounded.

I was once, in my early youth, a Presbyterian; and, when doubts of my religion first arose in my mind, I did strive to “quench the spirit,”—not of piety, but of inquiry. Had I succeeded, I might still have been a religionist. But an earnest desire after truth bid me *not* quench the spirit; the monitory voice of conscience reminded me that truth would stand the test of inquiry. “Be not afraid; test all things, and hold fast that only which is good,” was continually (as the tract has it) “pressing on my mind.”

Unlike the old man whose case is recorded above, I did not put off inquiry until a more convenient season. I obeyed the conscientious impression. I quenched not the spirit. I employed much time in searching Scripture and my own reason for evidences of truth. I did not postpone these, like the aged sinner, to worldly avocations; indeed, I sometimes devoted more time to them than worldly prudence would have dictated. But the more time I devoted and the more researches I made, the less evidence I found, and the more I doubted both the truth and the utility of what is called revealed religion.

It is in vain that A. M. Z. may tell me, that I hardened my conscience and shut my ears, and *would* not be convinced. My own heart acquits me of the charge. I know that I was an honest, sincere inquirer. I know that, if I hardened my conscience and shut my ears at all, it was against this very scepticism which, in spite of all my early prejudices, won the day at last.

I had no interested motive—I could have none—for the change. Scepticism is unpopular; and when I found myself adopting it, it was at first in fear and trembling, and in uncertainty whether honest inquiry itself were not a crime. He that accuses me, therefore, directly or indirectly, either of indifference or wilful blindness, accuses me ignorantly or wrongfully. I never neglected

the concerns of my eternal soul. Had I neglected them as others have done, I might have been a professing Christian still. But I neglected them not. My irreligion is the irreligion, not of carelessness, but of conviction.

What, then, would A. M. Z. have me to do? To inquire? I have done so, and have become a sceptic. To seek religion? I have sought, have weighed it in the scales of my reason—the only scales I had—and found it wanting. To believe without conviction? That is an impossibility. To feign belief when I have it not? That were a crime.

I *can* not believe. I *will* not say I believe, while I believe not A. M. Z. himself cannot surely require of me, that to atone for my scepticism I should become a hypocrite.

What, then, let me again ask—what would he have me to do, that I have not already done? Let him tell me; and if it can be done consistently with reason and honesty, I will do it. If nothing but the saving efficacy of God's election can turn me from what A. M. Z. calls darkness to light, let him not accuse me because I am not so divinely chosen. If the Deity reveal to him what he hides from me, let him not, while he congratulates himself, reproach me, merely because I am not an equal favourite.

He says I may make any remarks on his communication in my infidel paper; “but remember!” he adds, “there will be a day when you shall regret having turned a deaf ear to such warnings.” If such a day indeed arrive, when I shall stand before the judgment-seat of a great Immaterial Spirit, to answer for the deeds done in the body, then and there will I defend my honest scepticism. Then—when the secrets of all hearts shall be known—there, before that being who can distinguish and appreciate sincerity, will I say—as I say now—that for my heresies I am blameless. If A. M. Z. be there to accuse me, how shall he establish his accusation? Let us imagine the scene.

Accuser. During thy mortal life, thou didst turn a deaf ear to holy warnings.

Mortal. Nay, I heard them, but believed them not.

Accuser. Thou hast not known on earth the great Judge before whom thou now standest in heaven.

Mortal. True. There I knew him not, for he concealed his being from me. Here I know him; for he reveals to me his existence.

Accuser. I warned thee of his existence.

Mortal. And I believed not the warning.

Accuser. Dost thou confess thy fault?

Mortal. I have no fault to confess; but I confess my human ignorance.

Accuser. Thy ignorance was thy fault.

Mortal. To thee! hitherto unknown Spirit, I appeal: I knew

thee not on earth, for thou didst conceal thy existence from me ; I thought not of thee nor of this day of judgment ; I thought only of the earth and of my fellow-mortals. The time which others employed in imagining thy attributes, I spent in improving the talents thou hadst given me, in adding to the happiness of the companions thou hadst placed around me, in improving the earthly habitation thou hadst made my own. I spoke of that which I knew ; I never spoke of thee, for I knew thee not. To thee I appeal from this my accuser.

Judge. Thou hast well spoken. I placed thee on earth, not to dream of my being, but to enjoy thine own. Thou hast well done. I made thee a man, that thou mightst give and receive happiness among thy fellows, not that thou shouldst imagine the ways and the wishes of Gods. Even as thou condemnest not the worm that has crawled beneath thy feet because it knew thee not, so neither do I condemn thy worldly ignorance of me.

TRUTH AND ERROR.

THERE are, besides the great test of *consistency*, other tests of truth and error. Truth can stand alone ; she requires not that men should bolster her up ; she needs no prop to prevent her falling ; she is willing to be seen and examined ; nor is it necessary for her, in order to maintain her dignity among her votaries, to retire, like some eastern tyrant in his palace of state, behind the ancient bulwark of legitimacy, or in the time-worn stronghold of orthodoxy. The vulgar axiom regarding the influence of familiarity, may apply to the great men of this world, but to Truth it applies not ; the more familiar we are with her, the less likely are we to condemn or neglect her. Truth is a plain republican, who trusts for respect and power to the influence of her own simple character ; strong in its unpretending excellence, unaided by the pomp of circumstance or the dazzle of ceremony.

But Error is a true aristocrat ; a despot, shut up in his massy fortress, surrounded by outworks and defended by redoubts ; unwilling to be approached ; fearing to be seen or known ; looking for his dreaded sway to the influence of mysterious dignity, and uninvaded seclusion. He declares it to be a crime to enter his presence unless it be on bended knees and with submissive heart. He issues his commands to be obeyed, while Truth publishes her precepts to be examined. He is haughty and intolerant, impatient of intrusion, and afraid of discussion ; she is mild and cour-

teous, tolerant of the opinions of others, nor ever violent in support of her own.

Thus it happens that we hear of opinions so universally admitted that it is deemed unnecessary to prove them rational, and of doctrines so sacred that it is impious to doubt them. On the other hand we see men of science, mathematicians, physiologists, astronomers, chemists, stating their opinions without dogmatism, and hearing them questioned without acrimony. No mathematician ever impeached the sceptic who should deny that in a right-angled triangle the square of the hypotenuse is equal to the squares of the other two sides; he is so thoroughly convinced of the truth of this proposition, that incredulity provokes a smile, not an anathema: and if you speak to him of persecuting the infidel, and vindicating the offended cause of truth and mathematics, you will excite his astonishment and his pity—astonishment, at the supposition that there is not in his science evidence sufficient to establish its truths without extraneous support—and pity, for the ignorance that would produce conviction by force.

Men are apt to forget where human power ends. One man is no more able to regulate the opinions and doctrines of another, than to regulate the weather. Public opinion may say, it is true, "Thus thou shalt believe;" but will belief arise at the command? Legislators and governors may issue their commands, and may fix the penalties of nonconformity, but the extent of their power is but to create hypocrisy.

Sancho Panza's blunder, when going the rounds of his island, as governor, is one that his brother sovereigns, on the thrones of Europe, commit, whenever they legislate on religion, or dictate belief to their subjects.

"Here," said Sancho, "take the rascal, and order him to jail; I will take care that he shall sleep for one night without air." "'Fore God!" cried the youth, "your honour can no more make me sleep in jail, than you can make me king." "And wherefore cannot I make thee sleep in jail?" replied Sancho; "is it not in my power to confine and release thee when and where I please?" "How great soever your honour's power may be," said the young man, "it is not sufficient to make me sleep in prison." "How! not sufficient?" cried Sancho: "away with him, and let his own eyes convince him of his mistake; and lest the jailor should practise his interested generosity upon him, I will fine him in two thousand ducats, if he suffers thee to move one step from the prison." "All this is matter of mirth," answered the youth; "for the truth is, all the people upon earth shall not make me sleep in prison." "Tell me, devil," said Sancho, "hast thou got a familiar to release thee, and loose the chains with which I intend thou shalt be fettered?" "Now, my lord governor," replied the youth with a graceful air, "let us argue the matter, and come to the point. Suppose your excellency should order me to be carried to

jail, to be loaded with chains and shackles, and thrust into a dungeon, and lay a heavy penalty upon the jailor in case he should allow me to escape : and lastly, suppose he should perform his duty with all imaginable care and success ; notwithstanding all these precautions, if I have no inclination to sleep, and can keep myself awake all night, without closing an eye, pray tell me, is all your lordship's power sufficient to make me sleep against my will ?”

ON THE FEAR OF GOD.

THEOLOGIANs talk to us of that place of torment, “where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched :” they tell us that man ought to live in the fear of his God.

There are many unworthy motives in the world—jealousy, hatred, vanity, love of gain—but there is not one that is more unmanly or more mischievous than fear. It chains the tongue, and fetters the hand ; it deadens the faculties, and chills the feelings ; it crushes the elasticity of youthful resolve, and increases the hesitating indecision of old age. It sits like an incubus upon our noblest impulses ; it turns our wisdom into foolishness, and levels the generous with the selfish. There is more hope of the fool than the faint-hearted.

Yet this poor, paltry, pitiful motive—the characteristic of a weak mind, and the bane of a strong one—is held up to us as the life rule of those whom the Deity delighteth to honour. Men are to be virtuous, not because virtue is excellent in itself, not because it gives happiness to others and brings content to ourselves, not because it gains respect and inspires love ; no ! but because God is angry with the wicked every day ; a jealous God, visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children, even to the third and fourth generation !

Out upon it ! I had rather see a man a bold rogue, at once, than know that he was frightened into honesty. A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit, so neither can fear produce any good thing.

I can understand how *love* may be an incentive to virtue. Many a good hearted youth has been checked in vicious excesses because he would not forfeit the esteem and the affection of those he loved. But fear has a breath so cold and blighting, that every good thing withers before it.

A D D R E S S
OF
THE HOPES AND DESTINIES
OF THE
HUMAN SPECIES.

**" Man's age of endless peace,
Which time is fast maturing,
Will swiftly, surely come."**

SHELLEY.

BY ROBERT DALE OWEN.

London :
J. WATSON, 15, CITY ROAD, FINSBURY.

HOPE AND DESTINIES

OF

THE HUMAN SPECIES.

WHEN a traveller enters on a voyage of adventure, what so natural, or so fitting, as that he should carefully inquire what scenes lie before him; whither leads the path into which he has struck, and what the ultimate issue of his pilgrimage.

Man is a traveller; the earth a great field of untried adventure; and human life the route that conducts us on, from prospect to prospect; now leading us under a smiling heaven, by the valley's verdant footpath, through scented meadows and by peaceful fountains; and then bidding us thread the mazes of the darkling forest, or brave the storms of the mountain, or encounter the sultry terrors of the desert sands.

But devious as is the path; changeable as are the phenomena it discloses; unexplored too, as is the great future before us; yet are we not altogether without chart or compass to take the general bearings of our course, and anticipate its leading features.

We have analogy for our guide; analogy which teaches us with all the practical certainty, if not the logical severity, of mathematics, so much that we truly believe and implicitly trust to: analogy, which alone assures us that this night will, like the nights which have preceded it, fade into morning; and that the sun will rise to-morrow, as through past centuries he has daily risen.

We have seen or learned, that the sun has regularly ushered in the dawn through all the past; and thence we rationally receive assurance, that he will rise in the future; even though some ingenious Pyrrhonian may puzzle us to explain WHY it follows, that the same regular and unvarying sequences of natural phenomena which have been hitherto, will be hereafter. In like manner we have seen or learnt the progress of mankind in the past, and thence we may rationally deduce conclusions for the future.

Every one, perhaps, unconsciously draws such conclusions for himself. The most indifferent has, now and then, looked beyond his day and generation, and marvelled whither the Great Journey tends.—But how diversified the conclusions at which the reasoners arrive!

Look abroad over the world, note the sayings and actions of men, and you may distinguish two separate and contrasting classes that divide our race. Speak of human improvement, and mark how variously your words are received. From this man, of the cold eye and sarcastic brow, you will hear expressions of despondency, perchance even of contempt. He smiles at you, for a simple soul, who will learn better some day; or else, he sneers at you for a dreaming enthusiast, who must needs trouble his brain about wild notions of perfectibility, instead of sitting quietly down, as common sense bids him, to mind his own business and fill his own purse. "The world's a great workshop,"—such are the complacent reflections with which he hugs himself in a comfortable belief of his own superiority,—the world's a huge workshop, where wealth and honours and power are manufactured, wholesale and retail. Men are the tools to work with, and a cunning workman may drive a merry business, if he but once learn how to manage and use them. Men have always been dupes, are dupes now, and ever will be dupes. If I do not cheat and tickle them, my neighbour will; they cannot live without being cheated and tickled by some one. The question is not, whether the human animal is to be a fool or a sage; but whether I or another am to profit by his folly. Try to reform him, and you will be kicked for your pains. Flatter and humour him, give him pretty playthings to amuse him, and smooth his hair the right way—and he will be your pack-horse; he will kneel down and be loaded; he will get up and follow you, and step out proudly too, if you will but repeat in his ears, that to bear his load cheerfully is a noble occupation, honourable before men, pleasing to Almighty God, a holy fulfilment of the great end and aim of our being. Dream ever so long, reason ever so sagely, practical wisdom's precept is this: "The public's a goose, and a wise man's business is to pluck one of her feathers."

But speak of human improvement to the young and the guileless; to him whose aspirations after better things are yet alive; who still retains within his own breast that which belies the worldling's contemptuous estimate of mankind; speak to him of your hopes for the future; impart to him your anticipations of a long, long, endless progression towards peace, and knowledge, and happiness:—and then you will see his eye lighten, and his smooth brow expand. He hopes, he believes, because he bears about with him an earnest of those purer thoughts and nobler sentiments, which have power to create an earthly paradise.

Which of these two men is supported, in his anticipations, by analogy?—the doubter or the believer? It is an important question; a far more important one to us, the inhabitants of this earth, than can be any inquiries regarding other worlds, which it will be time enough to examine, when we find ourselves existing in them.

The question is very simple: What are the chances of happi-

ness for mankind? Is there a gradual and continued improvement in human society; or is there but the ebb and flow of a stupendous tide, that rises only to fall again; losing, during each alternate period, what it gained in the preceding?

To speak first of the general principles, which we see regulating earthly affairs:—

Regard the human animal, under all his varieties, the most noble, or the most degraded; take him as the intellectual Caucasian, of symmetrical limb, and ample forehead, and graceful carriage; or as the dull, low-browed, ungainly, unawakened, Caffree; as the tall Patagonian, or the dwarf Laplander; as the gentle and indolent South Sea Islander, ripened to an early maturity under the softening glow of a tropical sun; or the hardy seal-fisher of the far Arctic Sea, creeping up to manhood through the chills and darkness of a six months' night; take man under these, and a thousand other diversities, and you find in him, savage or civilized one great motive-principle; one common feeling, born with him, living for ever within him, and departing only when sensation departs—THE DESIRE OF HAPPINESS. As simpleton or as sage, as slave or as tyrant, in the hunting-forest or the courtly saloon, amid the self-mortifications of the cloister or the false indulgences of the debauch, hoping or fearing, suffering or enjoying,—man's instinct is towards well-being. By a thousand diverging paths, indeed, yet unceasingly in each of these, the human being feels forward towards that something which his reason, or his imagination, persuades him will make him happy. It may be a present pleasure, it may be a future enjoyment; it may be of a selfish or of a social character; his own welfare, or the welfare of those he loves; it may be a dream of earth or of heaven—it matters not; it is still a longing for happiness; an inward, unceasing, enduring, irrepressible impulse, that can no more be extracted from the human character, than can the shadow be severed from him who walks out in the sunshine.

The proof of this is to be found in the breast of every human being. It can obtain, and can require, no other

If human beings, (being of sound and healthy mind,) knew, and distinctly felt, from infancy to manhood, the consequences of every action, no actions would be performed, but those which tend to happiness; because, previously to the formation of evil habits, man is always decided in his conduct by his conviction of the balance of enjoyment. Man has not the power to desire misery; his voluntary actions are always regulated by his will; and he cannot will two opposite things at the same time.

A being ever desiring happiness, cannot (as a general rule) learn how to be happy, without becoming so; for where the will and the power exist, the action follows, as certainly as the descent of water to a level. In other words, true knowledge cannot be increased throughout the world, without a corresponding increase of happiness. I mean by true knowledge, an

accurate perception of the various means to become and remain happy, and of the various means to escape and avoid misery; or, as we may express it, a knowledge of the precise effects on human nature of all actions whatsoever.

Now, there is but one mode of collecting this true knowledge; by observing what happens, or by appropriating to ourselves the observations of others; in a word, by experience, either our own, or that of our fellow creatures. The more numerous and just our observations, personal and adopted, (that is, the more extensive and correct our experience) the greater is our stock of true knowledge.

But it will be conceded, that the world is always growing older; further, that it cannot grow older without growing more experienced, since every day exhibits new facts, and since these facts are continually observed and frequently recorded.

It follows directly from all this, that in proportion as the world grows old does the human race acquire experience; that in proportion as the human race acquires experience has it the true knowledge of good and evil; and that in proportion to man's true knowledge of good and evil, is man's happiness.

Thus, reasoning in the abstract, it appears, that the happiness of the world increases with its age. This will hold true of all worlds, if others there be, in which the inhabitants desire happiness, and have the power of imparting and transmitting their experience. It does not hold good of the animal races, because they cannot communicate their thoughts, nor record their observations. Their experience, therefore, accumulates only through a single lifetime, and each succeeding individual must begin at the beginning again, and must lay up, unaided, except by instinct, its own stock; which stock will, at its death, be again lost to its fellow-animals. Previously to the invention of printing, this reasoning applied less emphatically even to the human race than now it does; for then, experience was but imperfectly transmitted, chiefly by tradition, and was, in a measure, out of the reach of the mass.

The above views touching the natural tendency to human improvement, will appear in a still more striking light, if we call to mind another great pervading principle of our nature. Its character and workings have been well delineated by a modern poet:—

'Tis *CURIOSITY*!—Who hath not felt
Its spirit, and before its altar knelt?
In the pleas'd infant, see its power expand,
When first the coral fills his little hand;
Next, it assails him in his top's strange hum,
Breathes in his whistle, echoes in his drum;
Each gilded toy, that doting love bestows,
He longs to break, and every spring expose.
Placed by your hearth, with what delight he pores
O'er the bright pages of his pictur'd stores;
How oft he steals upon your graver task
Of this to tell you, and of that to ask:

And, when the waning hour to bedward bids
Though gentle Sleep sit waiting on his lids,
How winningly he pleads to gain you o'er,
That he may read one little story more!

Nor yet alone to toys and tales confined,
It sits, dark brooding, o'er his embryo mind:
Tell him who spoke creation into birth,
Arch'd the broad heavens, and spread the rolling earth;
Who form'd a pathway for the obedient sun,
And bade the seasons in their circles run;
Who fill'd the air, the ocean, and the flood,
And gave man all, for comfort or for food:
Tell him, they sprang at God's creating nod—
He stops you short with "Father, who made God

This restless searching after the hidden, this anxious desire to examine the unknown, this longing after unexplored facts, in a word, this LOVE OF EXPERIENCE will be acknowledged to promise much for man's improvement, when we reflect, that it is in fact, a love of the very soil, so to speak, in which, and in which alone, happiness springs up—a love of JUST KNOWLEDGE.

I know what reply misanthropy and despondency can make to arguments like these. "Is the world happy? Are men better, wiser, happier to-day than they were yesterday, or yesterday than the day before? There is the Red Man, the aboriginal sovereign of America's forests—has the gift of civilized experience been to him a gift of love and peace, bringing virtue and happiness? Regard him, in the simple majesty of his former ignorance, before the Pale Faces crossed the Great Salt Lake, in their floating dwellings; think of him as the forest philosopher, the stoic of the woods, the free, dauntless, generous warrior, the bold sagacious hunter, the faithful friend, the dignified human being: and see him now, with his new gained experience, chaffering for a dollar with some mercenary pedlar, or higgling with some government agent about the price of his father-land; or, worse than all, maddened to noisy violence, or debased to maudlin imbecility by the poison-waters which we, in our matured wisdom, have learnt to manufacture for ourselves, and to recommend, on all occasions, to our neighbours. Noble triumph of experience! Glorious example of the moralizing and enlightening effect of all the just knowledge which centuries of civilization have accumulated at our feet!

"Aye! or look back through these centuries:—was there not virtue, was there not strength of mind, was there not cultivation equal to any of which modern times can boast, hundreds, thousands of years ago? There was the rude integrity, the rational simple habits, the unostentatious and hospitable kindness of the patriarchal age: is the shilling-and-pence selfishness of modern commerce and civilized law so VERY great an improvement on these? Is there so MUCH more fellow-feeling now to relieve the wanderer and receive him into the porticoed dwelling, and at the over-loaded table of luxury, as there was then to bid him 'Tarry, I pray thee, with us until morning.'

to welcome him into the rude tent, to spread out before him the simple meal, and when he would depart, to bid him God speed, without making a market of kindness, and setting a price on good will.

"Or again, to retrace the annals of this nation, there were the honest days of good King Alfred, when gold and silver shall have been left unguarded on the highways, while men knew not what it was to steal. Would the shining heaps be so very safe among us, their enlightened and virtuous posterity?—or shift the scene to classic ground; to the land of Numa, the wise and the peaceful; of Brutus, the stern and the upright; of the self-devoting Scævola, of the patriot Curtius, of Regulus, preferring death to falsehood; of Arria, dying to encourage a husband's faltering resolve; the land of high-minded matrons and hardy soldiers; the eternal city, whose wisdom and prowess made her the mistress of the world; then cross to the Grecian Peninsula, visit Thermopylæ and Marathon, Athens and Lacedæmon. Say, are our senators so much more upright and incorruptible than the Roman? Are our politicians so much more noble-minded than he, who when he lost his election as one of the three hundred, went away rejoicing that there were found in Sparta, three hundred better men than he?—Are our soldiers so much more brave than Leonidas' little band?—our citizens so much more temperate than they who sat down to the black broth at Lycurgus' tables? Or, to speak even of the refined arts, have we rivalled Cicero? Have we better orators than Demosthenes? More cunning sculptors than Phidias, more finished painters than Appelles? Say, are we, with all our vaunted experience, so far beyond what millions have been, ages, long ages ago?"

These are melancholy views;—are they correct ones also?

Civilization has corrupted the Indian; true; but is not the very circumstance a proof, that the unfortunate savage with all his rude and romantic virtues, was far back in the race of improvement: that these his virtues were the virtues of inexperience not of conviction; were, therefore precarious, unstable, the offspring of varying impulse; at the mercy of circumstance; liable at any moment to be exchanged for vice. Such virtues are amiable and interesting, but not of a useful, not of a permanent character. They survive not the knowledge of good and evil. They are like the brilliant hues of the early dawn; they fade away, even at that moment when the luminary rises that is to enlighten the world. We err, therefore, if we class them high in the scale of improvement. The very experience of vice is often a step in advance of the virtue of ignorance; in advance, because it is frequently the sole means by which man, distinguishing his errors, rises to the virtue of knowledge; I mean, that virtue which, (shining here and there so brightly through the mass of civilization's abuses) can give a reason for the faith that is in it; has been adopted knowingly, not received

by chance; has been selected in preference to vice, not merely imbibed during the absence of temptation. The half-civilized Indian, then, may, even in his degradation, be considered, not happier or better indeed, but nearer permanent virtue and happiness, than when he roamed the woods, untempted and unseduced.

So is it also with many of the virtues of the patriarchal age. The patriarchs were simple, not because they contemned luxury, but because they knew it not; they were disinterested, not because they despised the venalities of civilized commerce, but because such commerce had yet no existence. To refuse hospitality would have been, in these early times, to doom the houseless traveller to death, while to accord it was to procure the rare and valued privilege of obtaining) what could not otherwise be obtained) the news of distant, perhaps unknown countries: it was a virtue, then, of the humblest rank, such as any one but the utterly heartless would cheerfully practise.

And then, with the lights, let us take the shadows also. If the story, so highly revered, of the world's infancy bear even a shadow of truth, little cause have we to regret, that we lived not in those primitive ages. Modern warfare is bloody and brutal enough; but modern warfare is tender mercy compared to the savage slaughterings of the olden time. Now, cities are sacked; then, nations were annihilated: now, those who resist are slain; then, the mother was stabbed on the domestic threshold; the daughter led away by her parents' murderers, to slavery and dishonour; the suckling dashed against the stones. Nay, is it not recorded that "they saved alive none that breatheth?" Are not the details before us—to select one pre-eminent sample of primitive horrors—are not the foul details before us of the Midianite massacre; the slaughter on one day, on one spot, of tens of thousands: perpetrated under no apologetical excitement, in cold blood, in deliberate, unimpassioned brutality; perpetrated (spirit of Mercy!) on those whom the hungry lion himself shall pity and spare—on women and infants alone! Tell us, if you will, of some monster-pirate—such do show themselves, now and then, on our modern seas—whose eye knows no pity, whose sword no hesitation, to whose hand the blood of hundreds clings: but the man of crime is outlawed, is execrated now; the relation of his deeds falls on the ear, at this day, as the report of some super-human phenomenon, out of nature, almost beyond belief. Speak to us—you may with truth—of the unfeeling selfishness of this still mercenary age: but let one existing nation perpetrate one single atrocity to match the common-place brutalities of ancient Israelitish warfare, even the dull sensibilities of modern civilization will burst forth in one universal cry of abhorrence; the nations of the earth will instinctively rise in mass, and unite, with far readier zeal than against the black flag of the Algerine, to annihilate this scandal on mankind!

Individuals there have been, in every age of the world, who lived, as it were, a-head of their time, possessing knowledge and virtues far beyond their age. Alfred the Great seems to have been one of these; but, for the romantic stories regarding the untouched gold and silver exposed in a country that had just been convulsed by civil war, and had for ages been the scene of sanguinary, intestine commotions; let us bear in mind, that they emanate from a period removed only by a century or two from the fabulous times of Prince Arthur, and his magical sword, and his knights of the round table. Let us recollect, that from the earliest period of authentic history, Great Britain has been gaining in liberty and knowledge; achieving, in early days, her trial by jury, winning from King John her Magna Charta, and from Charles her scarcely less famous Habeas Corpus Act. Let us reflect, that, even now, the great question of popular and governmental reform is, as at no former period, stirring up her millions from Cornwall to the farthest Orcades; that question which even to moot was little less than the crime of sedition or lese-majesty, one little century since. Let us be reminded, that, throughout Europe, at this moment, even the peasant can talk of the rights of man, and not a crowned head can tell how soon these rights may be more than talked of. Is not Philip of France even now fain to acknowledge himself King by the voice of the people, not by the grace of God? and when, until the last century, has it been the fashion to talk of the serf as the creator of his suzerain, or regard the mob as the elector of its monarch. When, until now, have the PEOPLE, the producing millions, been admitted to play the chief part on the stage of history. When, until now, have the people been spoken of, spoken to, cared for, instructed? The classic schools of philosophy still win our veneration; but was it the *people* who walked the groves of Academus, or filled the Stoic Portico, or even that thronged the garden of the virtuous Epicurus? Were there Mechanics' Institutes in Athens;—common schools throughout Greece? Was it not the few, the favoured, selected few, that ancient philosophy deigned to address; and, for the peasantry of Attica, of what were they composed? of men too ignorant even to scrawl on the condemning shell the name of him whom they banished, because they were tired of hearing him surnamed "the Just."

Leonidas' soldiers were brave, Lycurgus' pupils were temperate—but modern history can exhibit a courage of a higher order, a temperance of a nobler kind than Sparta's. Modern Paris has far, far outshone ancient Lacedemon. Her *millions* have been philosophers—practical philosophers. Oppressed, insulted, outraged, they rose, unarmed men against a weaponed soldiery, undisciplined youths against a regular army. They conquered. The power was in their hands, the oppressor at their feet. Their spirits yet smarting under the wrongs of a bleeding country, their pulses yet throbbing from the perusal of

royalty's iniquitous ordinances, heated by combat, flushed with victory, absolved from law, released from governmental control, what was the conduct of France's People? We vaunt the moderation of Alexander, and the continence of Scipio; the Parisian populace have outdone them both. Each one among the thousands in that Revolution (bloodless and blameless beyond any the world ever saw)—each one of these thousands was more than a Scipio, more than an Alexander. Dominion was theirs; they laid it down: riches were spread out before them; they touched them not; the men who had sought their lives were prostrate; they pardoned them. For evil they returned good; for violence, moderation; for the outrages of a tyrant, the courtesies of freemen. This one isolated occurrence might alone convince us, if other proof were wanting, that the world is no longer what it was; and that, while, in ancient times, individuals rising from the mass deserve our admiration, in modern days the masses themselves are catching the spirit of the age. At what former era of the world, in what nation, under what circumstances, has a struggle of such a character occurred? Will the most enthusiastic admirer of antiquity venture to assert, that, in the best days of Greece and Rome, the people were capable of an effort thus magnanimous? They were not. No such event ever happened. It is the growth of modern improvement—of modern improvement *only*.

But it needs not to rest the proofs of the world's gradual advance on any single fact, however striking. It may be read in the abandonment of a thousand prejudices—the improvement of a thousand institutions. What should we say now to a law, like that of Rome, giving us the power of life and death over our offspring, thus virtually justifying in a parent the murder of a son or a daughter? Do we reduce our prisoners of war to the grade of menial slaves, their very lives depending, even by law, on the will of a master, at whose tomb, perhaps, they are at last to be sacrificed by hundreds? Do we give the creditor power to sell his debtor into vassalage? Do we make the shedding of human blood our sole trade, as did the Spartans; or does our Chief Magistrate, (as did they of Rome) consult the entrails of animals to decide whether we shall go to war with other nations.

What has become of the trial by ordeal, so highly esteemed in the middle ages? Or of the zeal against witchcraft so ardent once on either side of the Atlantic? What has become, even of our grandmothers' faith in ghosts and haunted castles? Who is found now to study astrology, or read his horoscope in the stars? What would a devotee gain among us but pity or ridicule, who should spend forty years on the top of a pillar, or scourge his flesh to laceration, night after night? Or, how would that teacher be received who should assert now, as for centuries was preached and practised, that the rack was the fittest engine for conviction, and the stake the most effectual cure for unbelief?

How would an Auto-da-fe suit our modern atmosphere; or in what spirit would Europe and America now receive from a Roman Pontiff the ecclesiastical decree, which was to parcel off to each nation its allotted territory, and to summon before the ghostly tribunal each contumacious sovereign, who should demur to the credentials of God's early Vicegerent: or more assuming, yet the excommunicating ban which was to cut off a whole people from every joy here and every hope hereafter, which was to leave its millions accursed on earth, shut out from heaven; until in sackcloth and ashes, they wept away the blighting anathema, and, by such humble contrition, at length moved the holy man to pity and forgiveness.

True it is, that many of the arts and some of the sciences flourished in the olden time. The Apollo of the Vatican stands still, perhaps, unrivalled; and Canova could not mould a lovelier form than that in which the Grecian chisel concentrated the gathered charms of a nation of beauty, and embodied the mythologist's fairest conception of the goddess of love. Athenian orators were eloquent, and Egyptian sages were learned: but how much of the eloquence was mere laboured ornament, and how useless to the people was the learning, beclouded as it was with verbiage, and studiously covered up from the vulgar gaze under a load of ostentatious technicalities! Among the ancients, the sciences were so many mystical crafts, the signs and secrets of which were jealously kept from the mass, and disclosed, with infinite form and ceremony, to the initiated alone. It is but of late years, that the disciple of science has deigned to simplify and translate; formerly, his great object was to obscure and mystify. A British poet hits off the characteristic, not of one, but almost all the ancient schools of philosophy, when he says:

The wise men of Egypt were secret as dummies,
And even when they most condescend to teach,
They packed up their meaning, as they did their mummies,
In so many wrappers, 'twas out of one's reach.

Nor is it until modern days, that the observer of nature has stooped to separate humble, but useful, facts from showy and useless theories. The ancient naturalist was much like a child blowing soap-balloons. He inflated what little actual knowledge he possessed into some empty hypothesis, filled the gaudy bubble with his own breath, and then sent it up before a gaping crowd, who deemed it little less than some creation of magic, and forgot, in their wondering admiration, to remark, how soon it burst and vanished from their sight.

It may not be denied, that there is much of plausible still to urge on the gloomier side. "What," we shall be asked, "has modern science, with all her liberality, done to alleviate the condition, or add to the real happiness of man?" Look to her high places of triumph, the factories and workshops of

England, where she teaches inanimate machines to do every thing but speak and think. A peasantry once ruddy, cheerful, happy, even to a proverb, are now immured within the cotton-mill's foul atmosphere, or chained down to the monotonous loom, from earliest dawn till long after departing light. Their forefathers, in ruder times, went forth with the morning sun, gay and careless, to the fresh hay-field; the light jest and merry song lightened their labour; the cooling breeze renovated their strength; at mid-day they sought the hedge's green shelter, and healthy exercise gave a zeal to their frugal meal; at evening's close they returned to a quiet home, a cheerful hearth, and undisturbed repose. But their children are favoured of science, and the whole scene is changed! When the sun rises at his brightest, it is but to render more palpably visible, the stifling cloud of dust through which his beams reach the operative's colourless cheek. For the fragrance of nature is exchanged the effluvia of oil; for the sweet voices of birds, the unceasing rattle of machinery. The mid-day meal is snatched with greasy fingers, in the same cheerless prison; and, when the sun is gone and the season of rest approaches, then only is the worn-out spinner dismissed, to seek in some dirty alley, perhaps a comfortable garret, where he may enjoy a few hours of oblivion before the weary bell calls him forth to the toils and sufferings of another day. Truly, it is not of the MYSTERY of modern science we have to complain; her influence is practical enough; it comes home to the people; the labourers of Britain can vouch for the fact.

These are powerful arguments: they only know *how* powerful who have sojourned in our manufacturing districts—who have convinced themselves of the appalling truth, that factory-labour has been protracted, day after day and year after year, under an artificial and unhealthy temperature of eighty or ninety degrees, to fourteen, fifteen, even sixteen hours per day—and who have noted the pale, haggard faces, the premature decrepitude of figure, and (that surest mark of wretchedness) the slovenly neglect of personal decency, which characterize the drooping victims of an overgrown and a vice-bringing system of production. But let us not misconceive of causes, nor mistake temporary and incidental for enduring and necessary effects. Science has enabled man to produce the various articles of necessity and comfort with a facility and in an abundance that sets all calculation at defiance. This is a glorious, a joyful circumstance—one of the happiest victories of modern knowledge! Yes! we may look even on the heart-sickening picture of the poor workman's daily wrongs, on his wasting strength, on his pallid countenance, and say, that the apparent source of his misery is, in itself considered, a boon and a blessing to mankind; that the same magic powers of mechanism which seem to have ground him to the dust, will yet raise him to ease and affluence—will one day give the lie to the fabled curse that

dooms him to sorrow and drudgery—will become for him slaves more powerful and obedient than those of Eastern romance, and will supersede all other slavery. True—most lamentably true—our ignorance of social science has hitherto extracted woe and suffering from the source whence comfort and abundance should spring, “even”—to employ a poet’s fanciful simile—

Even as those bees of Trebizond
Which, from the sunniest flowers that glad
With their sweet smile the garden round,
Draw poison forth that drives men mad.

Those mechanical agencies which, controlled by wisdom, shall one day become our menials, are now our tyrant-masters; and, as with fire and water, when these escape our control, the misery they may inflict is in exact proportion to the services they might render. The first step in improvement was to discover these invaluable powers; the next will be rationally to employ them. And, whatever the immediate results, it was an important advance in civilization to take that first step: circumstances seem now combining to hurry on the second.

From the abstract argument of those who assert that man is conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity—that his nature is innately corrupt, his thoughts only evil continually, and his heart desperately wicked—I appeal to the secret consciousness of each one who now hears me. We have all faults and failings enough; but who among us has not felt that he might have been something nobler than he is—that his nature was better than his education? Who but has struggled against the world’s mercenary influences, or sighed over the frank, confiding kindness of early youth? The struggle and the sigh are evidences sufficient against the dark creed of depravity.

And, if the theologian turn to the world around us, and bid us note its crooked dealings, its mean chicaneries, its selfish tricks, I reply, that even when man learns these, he never loves them. It is not in the selfish bustle of the busy mart that we can judge what manner of spirit we are of: man’s natural home is in the country, and it is amid rural scenes that his native feelings freely expand. Who that has sat down in the balmy evening, to watch some lovely landscape, and looked into the quiet sky, and over the verdant earth, and breathed the air, scented by the breath of flowers, and heard the blythe birds pouring forth their wild notes of gladness and music—who, at such an hour, but has felt himself a being of a good and a gentle nature? Who, as each bland influence came over him, but has felt how much of love and virtue, how much of noble resolve and generous aspiring was stirring within him? Who, at such an hour, has doubted of man’s capability to be all that the most sanguine could desire him? Who, thus silently communing with his own heart, but will predict for his race a progress from evil to good, from selfishness to affection, from violence to gentleness?

But we shall be reminded, that an enthusiast's dreams prove nothing, while the actual condition of the world proves much. Argue ever so sanguinely, evil in every shape exists; be the cause within us, or without us, it is equally real—its actual influence is just the same. Theorize as we will, some cause has produced suffering in the past, produces it in the present, will produce it in the future.

The causes of human suffering, however real and prolific, seem to me (with the exception of death and, perhaps, of occasional disease) rather incidental and temporary than necessary and irremediable. They have their rise in passing ignorance, not in resistless fate. Man blunders into suffering, he is not condemned to it; he makes rather than finds unhappiness. This earth is full of beauty, redolent of enjoyment, and with all our ingenuity in marring the fair work, we are but partially successful: even were our success for the moment complete, there would be comfort in the reflection: *The marring is man's doing, and can be changed; the beauty is nature's, and is unchangeable.*

Among the proofs that man's character is changing for the better, none, perhaps, is more characteristic of modern improvement, than the gradual disuetude of brute force, and the gradual introduction, throughout society, of a system of inductive mildness in its place. We begin to be ashamed of using the birch at school, or whipping our children into good behaviour; public opinion cries out against flogging in the army and navy; even the irrational inmates of our lunatic asylums are now ruled rather by kindness than a strait-jacket. We speak of the rack and the thumb-screw as of by-gone horrors. We never burn heretics now, by way of converting them. We begin to suspect, that capital punishment may be dispensed with; and that it is a feudal barbarity to leave a husband the right of beating his wife, even with a rod no thicker than his thumb; physical strength no longer, as among ancient chieftains, gives rank or confers consideration. The supremacy of intellect is felt, the power of moral sentiment is acknowledged; and the sex, less strong, but more amiable than man, is gradually obtaining the rank to which it has always been entitled.

One most encouraging item yet remains to be noticed. You yourselves have seen and experienced it. The shackles are cast loose from opinion. What, at no former period of the world, men could do, they can do to-day. They can express, with legal impunity, their honest sentiments upon every subject. I hazard nothing by the assertion, that there are no principles so heterodox, be they of morals or politics, of social science or of theology, but they may be spoken, unchallenged by the legal authorities, not in America alone, but in Great Britain also, at this day; provided always they be brought forward, as all principles ought to be, in a spirit of seriousness, of mildness, and of charity.

In concluding this hasty and partial sketch of a subject, fully

to treat which would be to review the whole range of human knowledge, and trace out its earliest history; let me lay before you one important consideration connected with the prospect of man's progress in the future.

The conditions necessary to the accumulation of just knowledge, and the consequent increase of human happiness, are chiefly these: That all useful facts be easily recorded and widely circulated; that men of various districts and countries have extensive facilities of comparing and exchanging their respective views; and that there be no artificial check on the expression of opinions. Within a very few years, for the first time, perhaps, in human history, have these three conditions been fulfilled. The printing press has multiplied, as with ten thousand tongues, each item of individual knowledge: it has stamped immortality on experience. The conquered powers of steam have approached, as it were, the natives of distant states to each other, have thus increased, immeasurably, the chance of correcting narrow prejudices by varied intercourse with the world, and given to men at home the best advantages, without the labour of travelling. And—the last, best effort of modern intelligence, without which, the rest were comparatively useless—the press may print, and men may speak the honest truth, without mystery and without reserve.

Thus, from the tardiness of past improvement, it were idle to reason for the future. The ratio in former generations, is not the ratio in this. While men had neither freedom to express, nor facility to disseminate their thoughts, well might the regenerating spirit seem laggard or stationary. Now, at last, shall we see the human mind try its strength and speed. Nay, has it not already started on the noble race?—examining the credentials of despotic power, resisting the approaches of ecclesiastical encroachment, trying all creeds, testing all principles, proving all things, and holding fast that which is good.

Well may we rejoice in its destiny! Rationally may we predict for it a progress, if gradual, yet repaid; if occasionally interrupted, yet continually accelerating. Men may be sacrificed—mankind will be the gainers. Individuals may struggle for a time against error and prejudice, only to sit down in hopeless discouragement, or to perish before ever their reforming efforts have met success or reward:—the human race will still survive, will still improve; each coming day richer in knowledge than its predecessor, and every succeeding generation wiser and happier than the last.

FINIS.

ADDRESS

ON

FREE INQUIRY,

ON FEAR AS A MOTIVE OF ACTION.

BY ROBERT DALE OWEN.

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ADDRESS ON FREE INQUIRY.

If we cast our eyes around us in search of the features which characterize our nature and the world we inhabit, we shall distinguish among the most marked of these the principle of progressive improvement.

We may say what we will of the good old times, and may rail, not without reason, at the degeneracy of modern days—still man's course is onward, from darkness and ignorance to comparative intelligence and light. The partial and momentary checks which history records, are but as the backward ripple in the advancing tide. The ocean of knowledge rises from year to year, from generation to generation; and its waters, unlike the waters of earth, ebb not again. Experience, that undying teacher, who can gather the pleasant fruit of wisdom even from the blighted tree of misfortune—experience is ever at hand, to deduce, from the faults and the follies of the past, hope and counsel for the future.

Thus is man led forward; ever imperfect, indeed, but ever improving; erring and sinning again and again, yet finding even in his sins and errors a monitor and a guide. Behind him is the twilight of inexperience where he groped, in the world's infancy, in search of truth and knowledge, a prey to idle fears, the sport of untutored feelings; sometimes the slave, sometimes the tyrant; one day the inflictor of intolerant persecution, the next its victim; now peopling from a fertile imagination the fields of paradise, and now grovelling in the dust of selfishness, or consumed in the fire of angry passion. Before him is the promise of a better day, when the accumulating knowledge of mankind shall dawn through the clouds that shadowed man's early history—a moral sun, diffusing light and warmth over an awakening world.

It boots not curiously to inquire when and how man first sprung into being, or why he is destined thus painfully and gradually to emerge from the night of error and ignorance; enough that he now exists—enough that, while he looks back through the

vista of departed ages to primitive days of rude suffering and often of ruder crime, until the dark landscape is bounded by a veil of mystery, he can also look forward through coming years of matured intelligence, nor find aught so grand, so noble, so exalted, to which increasing knowledge and growing experience may not conduct him at the last.

Wise it is at times to consider the nature we possess—to examine its character and its capabilities; wise and fitting to inquire whether existing usages and opinions are in accordance with that character, and calculated to develop those capabilities.

Let us then cast aside, for one short hour, the anxious cares and petty solitudes that too often fill up the measure of human life, and let us together review our common nature and common prospects.

To the nature of such a being as man, a state of progressive improvement—that state in which a comparison between the past and the present results in favour of what we now possess and enjoy—in which the wonder of yesterday becomes a matter of common occurrence to day, while there is still something left of new, of fresh, of superior, to hope and to struggle for to-morrow—to the aspiring nature of man such a state of things is perfectly suitable. In the gradual transition from darkness to light he finds his hope and happiness. It satisfies his desire of novelty; it gratifies his love of excellence; it furnishes an object at once, and a continued reward to his exertions.

But has man wisely seconded the efforts of his nature? Are the laws that govern, and the opinions that regulate his conduct, such as befit a being of imperfect but progressive powers? Does he sanction and favour free, unfettered inquiry on all subjects, that so the errors of the past may gradually be detected and avoided in the future? Does he patiently, earnestly, fearlessly prove all things, that he may retain that only which is just and good? Does he submit all doctrines and all principles to the test of reason and experience, that so the increasing light of the present day may correct the crude views of past times? Knowing how often one generation detects the errors of its predecessors, is he modest, diffident, charitable, even in the expression of the most popular, and (for the present) most orthodox doctrines? Does he guard the right of free discussion as he would a jewel of great price? Does he perceive that to fetter inquiry is an act of treason to the cause of human improvement?

Alas! and must I say no to questions like these? Must I remind you how often authority is preferred to reason, conformity to conviction, credulity to inquiry? Yes! it is fitting we should remind each other of the course we are pursuing, and the goal to which it leads. It is fitting we should pause to scan our conduct and examine its results.

There exists amongst us as a people a love of liberty. The national bias at this moment is towards liberality. The national feeling disapproves of bigotry, and favours mental freedom. Now then at last may man consult the mental wants of his nature—that nature which is ever learning, yet ever ignorant—and may suffer himself to think and to speak without imagining sincere thought a crime, or interpreting its expression into a cause of offence. Now at last truth may claim the open support of her best ally—free, honest, fearless inquiry.

But if inquiry is to profit us it must be *honest*! The loaves and the fishes must not weigh against conviction; nor must our foot be staid because we may chance to find truth unpopular. If our judgment say no, we must not suffer our interest to say yea; no, not though that interest be treasure promised in heaven, a guerdon to the submissive and unquestioning believer.

And it must be *fearless*. The disciple of free inquiry works not out his salvation in fear and trembling, but in boldness and self-possession. Fear may be the friend of orthodoxy; it is the foe of truth. Before the throne of heaven we may kneel, our eyes closed and our reason prostrated; before the throne of truth we must stand erect, our eyes open and our judgment awake. As believers, we may tremble and submit; as inquirers, we must arise and examine.

Temporal and spiritual shepherds have busied themselves to imagine what their flocks may venture to investigate. With curious precision they have sought to determine the length of leading-string which they may safely allow to human reason. They have laid down the legal boundaries of thought, and chalked out the established confines of inquiry. This they tell us is too sacred to be touched, that too mysterious to be examined; here we approach a consecrated veil, there our footsteps trespass upon holy ground.

The freedom of thought and speech which public opinion allows us in this age and this country, reminds me of the political liberty of France as formerly defined and permitted by her Bourbon rulers. "There shall be"—so these legislators decreed—"there shall be full, unshackled liberty of the press in France. It is understood of course that no one shall so far forget himself as to remark upon the conduct of the king, his ministers, or nobles; or to criticise the measures he or they may propose; or to intermeddle in state questions; or to review the established laws; or to advert to the holy doctrines of religion; or to offer remarks on the actions and intentions of the reverend clergy; or to mention the rights of man; or stir up inquiry among the people: or, in short, to broach any subject whose discussion might tend to disturb the legal tranquillity of the realm. With these trifling restrictions, there shall be complete, unrestrained liberty of the press."

This decree, I say, strongly reminds me of our freedom of

speech, even at this day. Inquiry is made a thing of rule and measurement. We are told what it is proper to believe, and what it is impious to doubt. We have a long list of doctrines and ceremonies submitted to us, not to examine their worth or test their consistency, but to sanction and subscribe to them, at the risk of being regarded as heathen men and publicans. And then we are informed that, so we let these alone, we may inquire and examine on all other subjects as freely as we please.

I never liked the system of exceptions and monopolies and reservations. It is a suspicious system. It suits not this age of improvement. It suits not the nature of human beings.

Free inquiry was made for man. It is his life, his safety, his guardian angel. To forbid it is to place the soul under arrest, to put the energies of the mind in chains, to rivet the iron fetter of authority on the free-born thought. It is an endeavour to take from man the distinguishing feature and most ennobling characteristic of his nature, his thirst after excellence. It is to proclaim a fallible creature's errors irretrievable, to stamp immortality on prejudice, and issue a decree of attainder against experience. It is to proclaim infancy wiser than age, and the crude imaginations of youth more trustworthy than the matured judgment of manhood.

If there were question of some perfect spirits to whom experience were useless because error unknown, the attempt to limit inquiry were of less fatal influence. Happy in the perfection of their nature, secure in their infallibility, examination and inquiry could be to them occupations but of secondary importance, mere matters of curiosity. To us erring, fallible men, who decide and repent our decisions, who decree and repeal our decrees, who blunder on through ages of ignorance, asserting, correcting, altering, amending, and yet still find more prejudices to abandon, more errors to confess, more blunders to remedy—to us imperfect beings the privilege of free, unrestrained inquiry into all subjects, sacred and secular, holy and profane, is a matter of first necessity, —as essential to our mental health, as is the free air we breathe to our corporeal existence. To deny to us such liberty is to rob the soldier of his sword and buckler, to take from the mariner his magnetic needle, to snatch from the bewildered traveller his directing chart. It is to leave us without defence against error, and without guide towards truth.

Will you still tell me that I combat a shadow? Will you remind me that freedom of thought and speech is permitted in these latter days? To a certain extent it is. The dissenter from established creeds speaks not now with his life in his hand. Honesty is no longer a capital offence. A man may be a heretic, yet be suffered to live; he may even publicly disclose his heresy and be allowed to survive the disclosure. This is something; aye,

it is much: to the independent and the fearless it is a costly heritage; a privilege that has at last been purchased for mankind by the martyrdom of the best and the boldest of all former generations. But it is not every thing. A man has many things to lose besides his life: he has his popularity, his fair fame, his livelihood. To many these are grievous forfeitures—with all they weigh something; and popularity, fair fame, a livelihood, are, at this day, the common forfeiture for honest heresy.

I say for *honest* heresy: a man may be a sceptic and welcome, if he will but wear a fashionable cloak over his scepticism. His heterodoxy may be of as dark a dye as he pleases, so he consent to mix a due share of hypocrisy along with it.

But let a man dissent, in the depths of his heart, from those dogmas on which public opinion has set her arbitrary seal of approval; and let him step forward, in conscious rectitude and honest simplicity, openly to express such dissent, it is an offence which orthodoxy but rarely forgets or forgives.

Men may say what they please of such a state of things: it is immoral; it creates vice, it represses virtue. We complain that the rarest of all estimable things is a human being in whom there is no guile. It is very idle to complain of it; as idle as it would be in a farmer who had sowed tares, to find it strange that he did not reap wheat. We sow the tares of hypocrisy thickly and deeply over the land; is it matter of wonder that we do not reap the wheat of honesty and uprightness?

We call honesty a crime; honesty is a virtue. Honesty, even in error, is virtuous and respectable; every truly enlightened man will so consider it. It is the weak and the wicked only who find cause of offence or of fear when others sincerely differ from them in opinion; it is the weak or the wicked only who would attempt to dictate opinions, either directly by the rack and the sword, or indirectly by the terrors of a misguided public opinion. Any attempt, direct or indirect, to enforce conformity, is either an absurdity or a crime: an absurdity, if we expect thereby to reach the heart; and a crime, if we are content to force from the tongue a confession which the conscience disallows and denies. Simple argument is the means—and the only means—which one man ever ought or ever need to use, to correct the sentiments of another. Truth disclaims every other support. Men may tell us of errors so dangerous that they must be hushed up, lest the people hear and be deluded. There is no such thing; error is never dangerous if reason be left free to combat it. Those who say it is, say so, either because they know nothing of the power of truth, or else because it is error, and not truth, which they have to defend. Whenever the supporters of any cause resort to abuse—whenever they seek to brow-beat their opponents, calling themselves the good and the virtuous, and those who dissent from them the stiff-

necked and the wicked—whenever they shut their ears and close their pages to discussion—whenever they claim the right of speech for themselves, and deny the privilege of reply to others—be sure that it is not truth they are supporting. Whenever a cause requires to be bolstered up by motives of interest—whenever it leans upon popularity—whenever it is covetous of worldly reverence, and tremblingly alive to the observance of ceremonious forms—whenever it claims days and seasons for itself, and asks for millions of pounds or dollars to support its tenets—be sure that such a cause is not the cause of truth.

Simple truth is of all things the most powerful. Its advocates evince an honest confidence, equally removed from fear and from presumption. You will find men of science, mathematicians, physiologists, astronomers, chemists, stating their opinions without dogmatism, and having them questioned without acrimony. You never heard of geometrical heresies which it is dangerous to discuss. No mathematician ever impeached the sceptic who should doubt whether, in a right-angled triangle, the square of the hypotenuse is equal to the squares of the other two sides. He is so thoroughly convinced of the truth of this proposition, that incredulity provokes a smile, not an anathema. Speak to him of denouncing the infidel, and vindicating the injured cause of truth and mathematics; you excite his astonishment and his pity: his astonishment at the supposition that there is not, in the science itself, evidence sufficient to establish its truths without extraneous support; and his pity for the ignorance that would produce conviction by force.

Men are but too apt to forget where human power ends. One man is no more able to regulate the opinions of another than he is to regulate the weather. Public opinion may say, indeed, Thus shalt thou believe; but will belief arise at the command? Rulers spiritual and temporal may issue their decrees, and may fix the boundaries of permitted thought, and the penalties of non-conformity; but the extent of their power is but to create hypocrites.

When I am told that I ought to believe in any particular manner, I feel very much as a man might do who should be informed that he ought to be at least three inches taller, because his neighbours are so. The change of belief, like the addition of the three inches to my height, might possibly be advantageous, but it behoves my advisers to recollect that I cannot change either my creed or my stature merely at their request. I might as well be urged to be hot or to be cold as to be convinced. Bring me heat, and I shall be warm. Cool me, and I shall be cold. Give me conviction, and I shall be convinced.

If ancient history may be trusted, Xerxes, when about to invade Greece, determined to have a passage for his galleys cut through Mount Athos in Macedonia, and thus addressed the senseless

mountain: "Athos, thou proud aspiring mountain, that liftest thy head into the heavens, I advise thee not to be so audacious as to put rocks and stones in the way of my workmen. Submit, or I will hew thee down, and cast thee into the sea." Afterwards, when a storm destroyed his bridge of boats, he ordered chains to be thrown into the Hellespont to shackle and confine it, and that it should receive from his slaves three hundred lashes. Canute seems to have been a little wiser. When some of his courtiers, like true sycophants, would have him believe that all nature bowed submissive to his will, he ordered his chair to be set on the sea-shore, when the tide was rising, that the ocean's disobedience might read his flatterers a lesson in truth, and remind them where even royal prerogative ends.

This extravagance of Xerxes, ridiculous as it appears, is but the same which tinctures more or less the minds of all the rulers and leaders of mankind. Kings see the bodies of their subjects bend before them, tyrants can kill or save alive, priests can excommunicate and anathematize. And because tyrants and priests have really possessed that power—and a mighty power it is—they have thought to bend the minds as well as the bodies of their vassals, and to dictate, not their actions only, but even their thoughts.

But the mind is a Mount Athos, which no despot can hew down and cast into the sea, be it ever so audacious; it is a Hellespont, whose waves may be scourged, but cannot be shackled or confined by chains; it is an ocean, whose tides rise irresistibly, whether the sovereign set his chair on the beach or not.

I am a friend of moderation, an approver of mild speech, a lover of courtesy. I deprecate virulence of feeling or vulgarity of language. And though I would not have even tolerance intolerantly enforced, yet do I gladly see public opinion discountenance every attempt idly to wound an honest prejudice, unfeelingly to ridicule any doctrine, or violently to denounce even the bitterest creed.

Moderation and courtesy every man has a right to expect from another, but nothing more. The conformity of the heart is beyond man's power to command; the conformity of the tongue it is worse than useless to require. Yet such conformity is, even at the present day, unblushingly required. Men who call themselves the advocates of truth—who say their cause is founded on a rock, and that no earthly power can prevail against it—are not ashamed to employ in its defence every unfair and mercenary weapon which interest can dictate or wealth supply. Less scrupulous than the mathematician, they speak of denouncing as impiously wicked all who cannot see the proofs of their propositions; and hold it right and proper to vindicate the injured cause of truth and of religion by depriving every man and woman who does not see fit to take their road to heaven, of a good name and a livelihood upon earth. They lament the dangers of infidelity; and assert that if their opponents be suffered to win the ears of the people,

they will win their hearts also: therefore they will enter into no discussion. They choose that heresy shall be put down without an argument, and they caution their flocks against the impiety of examining both sides of the question; while, in the same breath, they assure us, with singular impudence, that they do not fear the test of inquiry nor the result of investigation!

The more timid, even among the sincere well-wishers to the cause of liberality, often ask why many reformers have so far deviated from what the world calls prudence, as publicly to express opinions opposed alike to ancient creeds and modern prejudices, and gratuitously to venture a crusade against a profession which is held, even in this nineteenth century, in popular reverence.

To such remonstrances one may reply in the words of the gifted and immortal Jefferson: "We have unwisely committed to the hierophants of our particular superstition the direction of public opinion, that lord of the universe. We have given them stated and privileged days to collect and catechise us; opportunities of delivering their oracles to the people in mass, and of moulding their minds as wax in the hollow of their hands." Such were the bold words of him who penned the declaration of America's independence. Such, expressed at the close of a long and eminent life, devoted to the service of his country, were Jefferson's opinions of the clergy, and of their profession, and of their Sabbath-days; and such are mine.

I believe that public opinion has been committed—and most unwisely committed—to clerical keeping. I believe that the clergy direct it injuriously and unjustly, in that they confound belief and integrity, and give that approval and that respect to acquiescing conformity which is due to honesty and uprightness alone. They permit the character of virtuous only to the household of faith; and idly and falsely estimate a man's moral worth by the length and the orthodoxy of his religious creed. They have endeavoured to impress on the minds of their disciples that there is but one good and virtuous class of men, that is the godly; and one wicked and worthless class, that is the heterodox in faith. They have called belief the source of all good, and scepticism the root of all evil. Is any thing noble and virtuous? it is, they say, the offspring of religion. Is any thing degrading and contemptible? it is the child of infidelity. Belief they would have us suppose, like the wand of some moral enchanter, calls into being in one moment, from the desert soil of repentant riot, the gentler virtues and the nobler feelings; and unbelief shall, like the sirocco from off the burning sands, breathe its scorching influence upon the spirit of him who till then knew no guile, and virtue and honour and integrity and benevolence shall wither and die in an hour. A mind that sought truth alone shall delight in reviling; a heart that was alive to the best and kindest influences shall change its very nature, and scepticism shall lower it to the level of the mean and

the sordid; he that feareth not God, neither shall he regard man; he that asserts nothing of the Christian heaven in another world, shall know no other inducement to virtue in this; and he who trembles not for the fiat of the day of judgment and the flames of the believer's hell, shall hesitate to commit no crime, and shall shrink from no excess. Little know they who so reason, of the nature of human feelings—little of the motives to human virtue. They slander themselves; they libel the very spirit of uprightness which dwells within them.

"It is the fashion of those who patronize an abuse," says some writer whose name has escaped me, "to ascribe to it all the good that exists in spite of it." Let us not give into this error, in speaking of religion and morality.

We find individuals orthodoxly religious and amiable. If I had ever been disposed to doubt this, the recollection of one who watched over me in infancy and guided me in youth would suffice to remove my scepticism. My own mother, whom not two years since I lost by death, was a Christian of strictest sect and most conscientious practice, and she was the kindest and best of mothers. But shall I outrage her memory by the supposition that her creed was the only source of her domestic virtue? that her goodness sprung, not from her heart, but from her theology? that she cared for her children, cherished her husband, and fulfilled every social duty, because the fear of hell was before her eyes?

Out upon a doctrine like this! kindness and virtue have their roots in the inner mind, not in the outward commandment. Neither religion nor scepticism can make the honest man a knave. Candour and hypocrisy alike lie deeper than theoretical opinions; and though sophistry and prejudice may mislead the reason even of the most upright, yet cannot the belief in *any* doctrines dry up his better affections, or brutalize his morals, or eradicate his integrity.

Let him who says it can, stand forth! Let him say if there be nothing of virtue or kindness within him that would survive his spiritual creed! Has he friendship merely by faith, and does he love at the bidding of theology? or, again, is it his catechism only that deters him from the drunken revel, that warns him from the brothel, that bids him avoid the gambling-table? Does he abstain from stealing merely inasmuch as there is a hell, and from murder only because a God forbids it?

Who would defend his creed at the expense of a confession so degrading as this? or who, if he heard the confession from the lips of his dearest friend, but would shrink in involuntary suspicion from this catechetical virtue? For myself, I will trust my fortune and my life in the hands of him whose principles and affections I feel to be based on a generous heart: I will not trust a sixpence of my property or a hair of my head to the man who has no other restraint but an enjoined decalogue!

Let me not be understood as denying that an enjoined decalogue is, in individual cases, an occasional restraint. The fear of hell on believers, as of the birch on schoolboys, has frequently, no doubt, a passing influence ; but this is a poor argument in favour either of the old church or the old school discipline. The question is not whether an abject fear of punishment has some effect ; but whether the same, and far more than the same effect may not be produced by worthier and more rational means ; whether boys may not be instructed without being stripped for a flogging, and men be governed without being threatened with a hell. The gentle and civilised spirit of modern improvement will soon decide, in both cases, that it can.

But the clergy are not content to set up conformity for virtue, and to set down nonconformity for vice. They are not satisfied to employ ungenerous words alone against their opponents. They would have the unbeliever to suffer not only in his reputation but in his purse. From him who withholds his assent to their creed, they bid their flocks withhold their patronage. They recommend that Christians should wear boots made by a pious shoemaker, a coat and waistcoat sewed by an orthodox tailor, and a hat manufactured by a regular member of the church. They would starve the stiff-necked and independent into religion ; and they would have men and women sell their noble birthright to free thought and honest speech for a poor mess of spiritual pottage.

Again, the power which the self-styled servants of God exert over public opinion is as universal as it is unjust. Like the being they profess to adore, they neither slumber nor sleep. They extend their pastoral care and exert their spiritual influence over every civilized country ; extend over the new world from farthest Canada to the Mexican Gulf, and from the shores of the Atlantic to the Indian wigwam on the Missouri. Week after week their temples are filled and their pulpits occupied. Week after week they have indeed golden opportunities to mould the submissive minds of their hearers, "as wax in the hollow of their hands." They have eloquence, that giant power, to aid them. And, even when eloquence fails, they have the magic influence of habit, and the slow but certain force of reiteration. "Give me," says Addison in one of his Spectators—"give me but the power of stating every day without contradiction to a man at his breakfast any opinion for a sufficient length of time, and I shall make sure of his belief in the long run." The clergy know by experience that Addison spoke truth.

It is the bounden duty, then, of those who believe with Jefferson, that the clergy mischievously control public opinion, to set their faces against spiritual assumption, and to remind mankind that those who would curtail the right of free inquiry are enemies to liberty and improvement.

On such subjects it is natural there should be hesitation. It is

natural we should ask ourselves. "Are we so much wiser than all the great and good men of former generations? Shall we question—shall we condemn what they tolerated—nay, approved?"

It might suffice to reply, that the same argument would apply to *all* improvements. But there is more to be said. On such a subject as this the truth must be spoken plainly; and the truth is, that the opinions which float on the surface of society are not the opinions entertained in the depths of the heart. Few are there—few have there ever been, among the leaders of mankind, who saw not through the flimsiness of the orthodox veil. But the Cromwells and the Napoleons among these leaders saw also that the same superstition which they laughed at themselves, was the most convenient of all tools when believed in by others. And even the good and the wise have bowed themselves before a mighty shadow; have tolerated what they never approved; have preserved a silence to which the clergy has given their own interpretation, and which the world has little right to challenge, until it learns to estimate honesty as a higher virtue than prudence.

The history of the republic in which, for the last six years, I have resided, most forcibly illustrates these remarks.

You have heard, I believe, of a visit which I paid, some months since, to Dr. Wilson, an orthodox clergyman of New York State. He hesitated not to admit that every one of America's presidents—except, perhaps, her present chief magistrate—have been, more or less, heterodox; that of all the governors of the two chief states, New York and Pennsylvania, from the revolution to the present day, two only of the former and one of the latter were professors of religion; and that Mr. Freilinghausen, senator from New Jersey, found last session, in both Houses of Congress only *seven* members who would join him in a prayer-meeting.

If we may judge by the manner in which the effusions of Mr. Percival's zeal are received in the House of Commons, there would be equal difficulty in obtaining names for a prayer-meeting list among legislators on this side the Atlantic.

Needs there a word of comment on all this? Truly the proofs superabound, that it is the people, not their leaders, whom the clergy hoodwink; that the noblest and wisest of all generations have seen through the veil which they deemed it imprudent—premature, perhaps—to rend asunder; doubting, it may be, whether the vulgar eye had strength to bear the light that had long been shed on their own.

Let us not fear, then; let us assert the claims of honesty to honour, of heterodox integrity to respect; and let us judge our fellow-creatures, not by their belief or unbelief in any doctrines, but the moral virtues they evince and the good deeds they practise.

ON FEAR AS A MOTIVE TO ACTION.

LET us transport ourselves, if we can, back to the days when our fathers were children; let us accompany them as they sauntered unwillingly to school; let us enter along with them some of those celebrated seminaries that were the pride and boast of the last generation—and we may learn a useful lesson. From the past we may learn and reason for the future.

If the boyish recollections of our fathers are to be trusted, these once celebrated institutions would not meet from us the veneration they excited in them. We should enter and find the long-robed and stern-browed pedagogue, the birch in one hand and the classics in the other, offering to the trembling urchin before him the choice of two evils. We should discover, stamped in legible characters on every wrinkle of that much-feared face, vengeance against the offender; or perhaps we might read, in expressive black letter, over his seat of power, some startling texts of Scripture like these: "He that spareth the rod hateth the son, but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes;" "A whip for the horse, a bridle for the ass, and a rod for the fool's back;" "Chasten thy son while there is yet hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying;" "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."

And as we looked around the learned precincts, we might note the sidelong glance of fear, or the subdued spirit of rebellion. We could not mistake the motive of action among the juvenile members of that petty despotism. It was fear, unhidden and unmixed—the same motive that has so often made abject slaves of those that were born to be freemen.

If we chanced to enter during some public examination, we should see touched another dangerous mainspring in man's character—his love of praise and distinction. We might mark the excited looks of the young rivals, as the silver medal is slowly taken from its gay morocco case, and exhibited to their view; and the flushed cheek and conscious look of pride in him who wins the valued bauble. We should see the reign of reward and punishment: reward, with its selfish hopes, its envyings, its jealousies, its contentions; and punishment, with its fears, its deception, and all its unworthy evasions and trembling meanness.

Scenes like these would impress us, probably, not with reverential awe, as they did our fathers, but with impatient dissatisfaction towards the system, and pity for its victims. Nay, such scenes might raise in us doubts whether those who were taught, in their youth to bow implicit obedience to the haughty, caprice of a scholastic tyrant, were not too well prepared to submit in after

years to the injustice of arbitrary power and the slavery of national despotism.

At the present day, the character of those seminaries that have obtained the greatest celebrity, is one of mildness and reason. It is the teacher's endeavour to induce, not to force, compliance with his wishes; to awaken a love of science, not a fear of punishment; to gain the hearts of his pupils, by evincing a uniform interest in their improvement, and to secure their attention by a familiar and attractive manner, and by a rational gratification of that strongest of childish passions—curiosity.

In education, then, our principles are on the change; we have substituted natural for artificial inducements. Instead of saying, as we used to say, "Learn, as you will avoid a whipping;" we say, "Learn, as you will avoid ignorance, and become a valuable member of society." We excite to the acquisition of knowledge for its own sake, not for the sake of a silver medal. And who can estimate the advantages that science and freedom have gained by the change!

May we not hope that the next fifty years will witness as rational a change in our *churches*, as the last fifty years have witnessed in our *schools*?

Why should our selfish passions be excited by holding out to us the joys of heaven as a prize for good behaviour? Is there not in kindness, in disinterestedness, in generosity, in all the social virtues, enough to recommend their practice without some artificial stimulus? Why work upon our fears by reminding us of the Almighty's rod, and of the fires he has kindled to torture the disobedient? Is there not in vice, in excess, in selfishness—if they are but exhibited in their true colours—enough to make man fly them as he values his happiness?

Yet enter a house of God, as it is called, and listen. Hear the threats, the denunciations; look on the awe-struck faces of the women, the children, and even the men, as the preacher proceeds; then mark, as he changes his tone, and speaks of the rewards laid up in heaven for the believer, how the feelings of his auditors are wound up. He has touched the same chord which the pedagogue touches when he speaks of medals and prizes, or the sovereign when he promises stars and garters.

It may be safely predicted that the time is not far distant when the philosopher will discard prizes and punishments from his moral system—when men will be taught to follow virtue for her own sake, and to avoid vice for its own deformity. In the *consequence* of each action we shall then find a much more efficient and much more noble motive, to perform or to avoid it, than is furnished at present by the hope of heaven and the fear of hell.

R. D. O.

REASON and free inquiry are the only effectual agents against error. Give a loose to them, and they will support the true religion by bringing every false one to the test of their investigation. They are the natural enemies of error, and of error only. Were the government to prescribe to us our medicine and diet, our bodies would be in such keeping as our souls are now. In France, the emetic was once forbidden as a medicine, and the potatoe as an article of food.

It does me no injury for my neighbour to say there are twenty gods, or no god; it neither picks my pocket, nor breaks my leg. If it be said his testimony in a court of justice cannot be relied on, reject it then, and be the stigma on him. Constraint may make him worse, by making a hypocrite of him, but it will never make a truer man; it may fix him obstinately in his errors, but will never cure them.

Government is just as infallible, when it prescribes system in physics. Galileo was sent to the inquisition for affirming the earth to be a sphere; the government declared it to be as flat as a trencher, and Galileo was forced to abjure his error. This error, however, at length prevailed; the earth became a globe, and Descartes declared it was whirled round its axis by a vortex. In fact, the vortices *have* been exploded, and the Newtonian principle of gravitation is now more firmly established on the basis of reason, than it could be were the government to step in and make it a necessary article of faith. Reason and experiment have been indulged, and error has fled before them.

It is error alone which needs the support of government; truth can stand by itself. Subject opinion to coercion, and whom will you make your inquisitors? Fallible men—men governed by bad passions, by private as well as public reasons. And why subject it to coercion? To produce uniformity. But is uniformity of opinion desirable? No more than of face or of stature.

Difference of opinion is advantageous to religion. Is uniformity attainable? Millions of innocent men, women, and children, since the introduction of Christianity, have been burnt, tortured, fined, imprisoned; yet we have not advanced one inch toward uniformity. What has been the effect of coercion? To make one half the world fools, and the other half hypocrites.

Let us reflect that the earth is inhabited by a thousand millions of people; that these profess a thousand different systems of religion; that ours is but one of that thousand; that if there be but one right, and ours be that one, we should wish to see the 999 wandering sects gathered into the fold of truth. But against such a majority we cannot effect this by force. Reason and persuasion are the only practical instruments. To make way for these, free inquiry must be indulged; but how can we expect others to indulge it, while we refuse it ourselves?—*Notes on the State of Virginia, by Thomas Jefferson.*

WEALTH AND MISERY.

BY ROBERT DALE OWEN.

“ But, shall it ever thus remain ?
Shall man contented be
To starve, creating wealth for those
Who mock his misery ?
No ! ev’ry hour of time improves
The mighty wing of Mind,
And Man shall learn his power and leave
His woes and wants behind.”

C. COLR.

London :

J. WATSON, 15, CITY ROAD, FINSBURY.

1841.

WEALTH AND MISERY.

The aggregate of those objects that supply the wants and contribute to the comforts of man, is WEALTH.

A man who has a regular supply of the objects of necessity and comfort is a wealthy man. He who has them not, is a poor man.

It has been found convenient to *represent* wealth by portions of the precious metals, and by pieces of paper called money. MONEY, then, *is a conventional representative of wealth*; adopted, in many nations, principally because it is more portable than wealth itself.

Money is not wealth, no more than words are ideas, or the painting of a horse is the animal itself. Yet, in consequence of the facility to exchange money for wealth, which at present exists in this and other countries, called civilized, many of us have become accustomed to regard these two as synonymous terms; and even to say wealth when we mean money, and money when we mean wealth.

Let us carefully avoid this error; for, gross as it appears, when stated, it is yet often unconsciously made; and, once adopted, it effectually excludes from the mind all correct ideas on the subject we are about to treat. Let us recollect, that if a man were cast away like Defoe's Robinson Crusoe on a desert island, and had found there a million of dollars, they would not enable him to procure even a draught of cold water: he would not be richer or poorer on account of their possession. And, on the other hand, one whose wants and comforts are regularly satisfied is a rich man, though he possess no money; all we can say is, his riches have not been represented by any artificial sign; but they are not the less valuable on that account.

The objects which supply man's wants and comforts are very various and numerous. *Wealth*, then, consists of a great variety of products; some of them are more, and some less difficult to produce and prepare.

In the rudest state of society, each man produced for himself whatever he consumed: but by degrees it was discovered, that many more comforts could be obtained by a division of labour. One man, for instance, was found to excel in hunting,

another in erecting huts, to defend from the inclemency of the weather; and the one agreed to hunt for his neighbour, while the latter constructed a habitation for the hunter. Thus originated professions, trades, and a division of labour. The advantages thence obtained were great: steady uninterrupted employment resulted in increased skill and facility of production. In consequence, barter became general, and was gradually changed through a long series of intricate and complimented modifications, till it assumed its present commercial form and character. Its object, however, still remained, or ought to have remained, the same, viz.: to PRODUCE and DISTRIBUTE *wealth in the most advantageous manner.*

One of these objects has been obtained by commercial rivalry. Wealth is *produced* most abundantly. Competition has urged the human mind to the invention and application of mechanical improvements and chemical discoveries, till these have been made to create wealth for man to an enormous extent.

What that extent is at present in Great Britain, no one, that I know of, has ever endeavoured to ascertain, except my father, Robert Owen. He saw the vast results to be obtained even from a rough estimate of this immense and continually increasing power; and he possessed all the advantages for the task, which an extensive personal experience as a manufacturer, and an access to the most authentic statistical documents, could furnish.

Although he soon discovered that all the documents he could obtain, were insufficient to furnish a perfectly correct estimate, yet he saw enough to convince him that, whatever the exact amount of Britain's scientific power might be, *at least it exceeded the manual labour of FOUR HUNDRED MILLIONS of working adults.* That is to say: to create as much wealth *without* labour-saving machines and apparatus, as Great Britain's five millions of work-people produce *with* these artificial aids, *would require an additional population of four hundred millions of workmen.* And he has further ascertained, that, *nineteen twentieths*, at least, of this artificial power have been created within the last century.

These are all-important facts. Those who have not investigated the matter, may read them with incredulity. But the following statement will probably produce a conviction that the amount is not below that now stated:

Some years ago, three of the principal British manufacturers of cotton yarn made in different parts of the kingdom separate estimates of the quantity each workman in their establishments produced, *compared* with the average production of one person on the plan formerly pursued, that is, with hand cards and single spinning-wheel. They found, on examination, that they agreed in the conclusion that the proportion between the

quantity produced by one person with the present machinery and one on the former plan—was as 120 to 1; subsequent improvements have since raised the proportion to that of 150 to 1. But suppose the former; then, as there are about 300,000 persons employed in cotton-spinning in Great Britain, it follows that it would require 36,000,000 of work-people to produce, unaided by the late mechanical improvements, as much cotton yarn as 300,000 persons do actually produce. Now 36,000,000 is nearly one tenth of the whole amount as estimated by Robert Owen; and yet cotton-spinning is only one branch of one manufacture.

This estimate, therefore, cannot be very far wide of the truth; at all events, it is abundantly sufficient for our purpose.

I have stated, that the amount of scientific power now employed by Great Britain, to aid her working population in producing wealth, is equal, according to the estimate of Robert Owen, to the unaided manual labour of *four hundred millions* of workmen. Although I have given this estimate as an approximation only to the exact amount, yet I am convinced that it is not far from the truth; and I think it is more likely to be *below* than *above* the reality.

Still to avoid all possible cavil or charge of exaggeration, we will take the amount at one half of the above, or at *two hundred millions* only. This estimate, though probably so much below the truth, is quite sufficient for our argument.

The present population of Great Britain may be about 20,000,000. One fourth of this number is a large proportion of the whole to estimate as actual producers; but say one fourth, or 5,000,000. Then it follows, that each producer in Great Britain creates in any given period of time as much wealth, as at an earlier period of the world *forty workmen* produced in the same time. *Great Britain is therefore forty times more wealthy now than she was then.* Yet at that earlier period of the world, her population found means to subsist, and comfortably too; *much more comfortably* than her working class subsists to day: for starvation and a *famine fever* were evils scarcely known to their simple ancestors.

Or, to regard the subject from another point of view, the change to Great Britain, by the accession of modern scientific labour-saving power is the same as if *each one of her work people had forty slaves labouring for him day after day, from morning till night, without a moment's idleness*; YET REQUIRING NEITHER FOOD NOR CLOTHING FOR THEIR SERVICES.

Strange, almost incredible, as it may appear, this is *literally true*: and any one, who will take the trouble to examine the subject attentively, may satisfy himself that it is so. The fact, we are convinced, admits not of denial; and, what a lesson does it read to us!

It tells us, that one fortieth part of the present wealth of Great Britain formerly afforded her population subsistence and comfort. But that population does not require more food and clothing and other necessaries, (that is, more wealth) now, than they did then: as, then, a great number of British labourers *have not*, at this moment, wherewith to subsist in comfort—the direct and necessary inference is, that *by some means or other*, A LARGE PROPORTION OF GREAT BRITAIN'S WORKING POPULATION IS NOT SUFFERED TO ENJOY SO MUCH AS ONE FORTIETH PART OF THE WEALTH THEY PRODUCE. The other thirty-nine fortieths are used, or dissipated, or destroyed in some way or other, by some persons other than the producers.

Can these things be so? They are so, and the fact is demonstrated. Then by what strange fatality has a fact like this been overlooked by legislators and by modern political economists? I know not, unless it be because mankind have been unfortunately trained to despise what is plain and simple and useful; and to look for knowledge and enjoyment to those productions of the mind and body, whose acquisition costs pain and labour: or, perhaps, because the fact was thought too striking and dangerous to be made known to the public.

Now, with such a fact before us, what shall we say of the present distress in Great Britain?

It cannot be produced by the taxes, imposed by her government, large as they appear. Niles, in his weekly register, (of the 23rd of September, 1826,) estimates these at 103 dollars per man per annum: this estimate is higher than any other I have seen, but suppose it accurate. One hundred and three dollars represent scarcely as much wealth as is sufficient to support a family; this cannot, therefore, be more than one fortieth of Britain's wealth; *because* one fortieth of that wealth *did* formerly, and therefore *might* still, afford to each family a comfortable subsistence. It follows, that Britain's taxes, excessive though they be, abstract at most one fortieth only of the wealth produced by her inhabitants; leaving the abstraction of thirty-eight fortieths of each workman's produce unaccounted for.

It is evident, therefore, that the conclusion at which Mr. Niles arrives, in the otherwise ably written article to which we alluded above, is incorrect. His conclusion is, that Britain's distress arises from the extravagant demands of her government and clergy in the shape of taxes; now, though these taxes may, and certainly do, in some degree, add to Britain's present misery, yet I proved, as I think, conclusively, that this is a cause totally inadequate to produce more than a very small portion of the evil complained of.

The question recurs: Whence, then, this enormous evil? Are we to look for its cause in the increase of scientific power in

other countries, rivals to Great Britain; by which they are enabled to produce for themselves?

Doubtless the gradual and general introduction of scientific power throughout the world, must ultimately ruin Great Britain, *if she persists in attempting to preserve her present system of commerce*; every day's experience is a proof of this.—But this fact is nothing more than an evidence of the wretched tendency of the commercial system. *Must the British starve because their neighbours learn to increase their own production of wealth?* By what sophistry will modern legislators attempt to convince us, that *the increase* of wealth in France, or Spain, or the United States, or any where else, *NECESSARILY produces a diminution of wealth in Great Britain?*

"The fact that it *does* produce that effect," they will perhaps tell us, "is enough."

It is indeed enough; but for what? Enough to prove to the world that a system which bases England's commercial prosperity on the poverty and adversity of neighbouring nations, erects that prosperity on a sandy foundation; the tide of improvement, as it rises, will beat against it, and great will be the fall thereof.

Not in Britain's system of taxation, then, extravagant though it be, and ruinous though it appear; nor yet in the increasing wealth and growing commercial independence of her neighbours—must we look for the real cause of her strange and anomalous situation. It must be sought for elsewhere.

Great Britain has learned to *produce* wealth, and does produce it most abundantly; but she has not learned to *distribute* it, and hence her present distress.

Wealth, as we have already stated, consists in a great variety of products: and man, to live in comfort, requires a certain portion of each of these.

Now, it is evident that if each one could *produce for himself* all the various articles of wealth that he requires, no possible injustice could happen in the distribution; for each producer would retain and consume his own produce. It is also evident that, if such a state of things could exist, labour-saving machines *must necessarily* either increase man's comfort, or diminish the hours necessary to labour: for instance, if a man's powers of production increased forty-fold, and he was still content with the same quantity of wealth which satisfied his wants previously to that increase, he would only require to labour during eighteen minutes each day instead of twelve hours; or else, if he did work twelve hours, he would daily acquire forty times as much wealth.

But this we know to be impossible without giving up the immense advantages attending a division of labour. It would throw us back almost into the savage state. A workman can-

not produce with advantage either to himself or the community, more than a very few different kinds of wealth; these it is evident cannot supply his wants; he can himself use but a small part of them, and the rest must be *exchanged* for other articles. Now it is evident that it is *the manner in which these necessary exchanges* are made that produces want and poverty; for we have just seen, that if no commercial exchanges were made at all, no injustice in distribution could occur; and the producer would increase in wealth, *just in proportion* as his means of production increased. In other words, it is *the present system of commercial exchange* that deprives Britain's labourers, in some way or other, of thirty-eight fortieths of the produce of their industry, and often starves them altogether because they have already overstocked the market, and are thus become useless as producers. Can no better system of exchange be devised than this?

Let us suppose a large family, the various members of which were of different occupations: some farmers, others carpenters, some bakers, others weavers, and so on. And, suppose this family producing for its own consumption. In what way would its members effect the necessary exchanges of produce?

There are two different and distinct ways in which it might be done.

Either—the farmer might sell his grain and other produce to the bakers, the carpenters, and the other members of the family, for money, with which money he would afterwards purchase from them what articles he wanted; while they in their turn, would dispose of their surplus produce in like manner, and for the same purpose. This is the *commercial system*, in its simplest and least injurious form.

Or else—the farmers might agree to supply the family with the products of their farm as they were wanted, the carpenters to prepare the necessary wood-work, the bakers to bake as much bread as the family required, and so of the others, each one furnishing his proportion to the family stock, and drawing from it what he required. This plan would supersede individual trading, and may be termed the *federative or co-operative system*.

Now suppose farther, that this family were just able to supply their wants: this would be a state of comparative adversity and poverty. And, under the commercial system, what would be the consequence? The farmers, so soon as their grain was gathered in, would immediately find some one of the others ready and desirous to purchase it of them; the bakers would dispose of their bread as soon as it was baked; the weavers of their cloth whenever it was taken from the loom: and thus each would regularly obtain the means of purchasing the articles of wealth he daily required. The greatest stimulus would be given to the industry of the family, and labour-saving machines would be eagerly resorted to so soon as they became known

This increase of productive power would greatly increase the wealth of the family. Each one would soon be able to supply *much more* than his portion towards the family wants. This, then, would be a state of comparative ease and prosperity. But under the commercial system what happens? One of the farmers wishes to dispose of his grain as usual, but, (must we say *unfortunately*?) the family has grain enough already, and it remains on his hands; the baker brings his bread, but finds that the family are already supplied with as much as they can eat, and his bread therefore is not wanted; the weaver produces his cloth, but every one is already clothed, and no more is required: therefore his cloth is, for the present, useless. What follows? Why, that the farmer, though he has grain enough, and to spare, can get nothing else; the baker has bread to be sure, but he can obtain no money for it, wherewith to purchase other articles of necessity; the weaver's shop is filled with cloth, but that will not afford him food for a single meal. If we suppose that these persons have saved a little money, still they will only purchase sparingly, not knowing where they may obtain more; and the less they purchase from their neighbours, the less money do their neighbours obtain, and, consequently, the less can they purchase in return. This diminishing consumption increases each member's stock on hand, till at last the family market is fairly glutted. Then one farmer, or other producer, lowers his price, that he may undersell the others; the others are forced to imitate his example, though conscious that by so doing they are obtaining less and less for their labour. But even low prices will not induce the members to buy more grain, or more of any other produce than they can consume; so that such relief is but momentary, and ultimately renders matters worse.

What remains to be done? The members of the family probably look out for a market among other families, whose wants are not so fully supplied, and thus dispose of their surplus wealth in exchange for the money which they require, to obtain from their fellow members the necessaries of life. So long as other families are ill supplied at home, this course affords relief. But they, too, gradually learn to produce in abundance, and will take no more external produce.

Thus all the wealth of the family is again forced back into the home market, and then comes poverty and distress in every shape. The weavers starve, the farmers are ruined, and the whole family is reduced to despair. And for what reason? Because the members have, each one, so much wealth that *they cannot find means to exchange products* with one another, in fact, *they are over supplied with all the necessaries of life to such a degree* THAT THEY KNOW NOT HOW TO PREVENT HALF THEIR MEMBERS STARVING FOR WANT OF THEM.

This is commercial prosperity! the grand object of pursuit to which Britain, after years of unremitted industry, is at last approaching; and whither France and Germany and the United States, and all other commercial nations, are rapidly following her!

It appears, then, that a system of commercial competition, under which it becomes necessary that each producer should obtain in the market a monied representative of his produce before he become entitled to obtain any of his neighbour's surplus—is a system which, though well enough calculated, perhaps, for a state of national poverty, becomes ruinous so soon as a nation rises to national wealth and prosperity. In other words, commerce may serve to distribute wealth, *while the demand exceeds the supply*; but so soon as *the supply exceeds the demand*, and a nation has more than enough of every thing, then commerce becomes a destroying hydra that devours the hard-earned bread of industry, and dooms her victims to perish for want in the very midst of wealth, they themselves know not why or wherefore.

I shall be told, perhaps, "that it is impossible in the nature of things, that a free commerce should *ever* deprive man of the produce of his labour; least of all that it should in any case abstract from him so enormous a proportion as thirty-eight fortieths of the wealth he has created."

There are, unfortunately, before us proofs but too convincing that *it does*. Do we not know that the state of commerce has occasionally compelled producers to sell their wealth *at or under the prime cost of the raw materials* that compose it? and is not this an abstraction of *forty fortieths*—that is, *of the whole of that producer's labour*?

Further—is it not evident that the greater the wealth of a nation, the more frequent such an unjust and ruinous commerce? under which a man may labour early and late, *yet not obtain one cent* in return for his exertions.

To what *can* a continually accumulating increase of scientific power lead under such a system of commerce? To ruin only, and to starvation. What avails it that we are gradually obtaining inanimate, unconsuming, yet continually industrious and producing slaves to work for us, and relieve us of the drudgery of hard labour? Nothing: we bring their labour into the market and sell it *against* the labour of man; and thus it is that the invaluable aids which science offers the producer, and which *might* raise him to ease, independence, and affluence, do but oppose and oppress him, and render him ten-fold more the child of misery than before.

The world, in its progressive movement towards knowledge and happiness, is rapidly approaching a point when commercial competition must cease. Nations are becoming too wealthy

and prosperous to be commercial. A system of distribution which requires *scarcity* to support it, becomes worse than useless at a time of plenty. Wealth is already beginning to be like water, too easy of production to remain an article of commerce.

Water, though one of the most valuable articles of wealth, is so abundant in most countries that it cannot be distributed through the medium of commerce. If any one attempted to sell water, it is evident, *that he could not obtain for it any monied representative* in the market, because every one has already a full supply of it. But because this *commercial* method of distributing a most valuable article of wealth is impracticable, must mankind, therefore, die of thirst? No; the matter was so glaringly obvious that men could not avoid seeing the possibility and practicability of using water freely, *even though it could neither be bought nor sold.*

One article of wealth then, and a most valuable one too, cannot become an article of commerce, *solely because it is so easily obtained.* Hence it is evident, that if the aids of science render it gradually more and more easy to obtain each article of desire, we shall at last arrive at a point when no article of wealth can possibly become an article of commerce. Hence, too, it follows, that science is rendering commerce every day less and less adapted to the gradually advancing state of society; and the gradually increasing means of wealth and comfort.

Now, if we are to merit the character of wisdom or avoid the imputation of improvidence, we must not cling to an antiquated and injurious system of distribution, until necessity shall force us to abandon it. Commerce is beneficial or it is injurious.—I have proved it, as I believe, to be injurious. Am I wrong? let my arguments be examined and disproved. Am I right? let not careless supineness put off the evil day, nor say, "To-morrow will take thought for the things of itself." Indifference cannot avert the coming crisis, no more than she can neutralize any of the other great effects produced by the world's progressive improvement. But prudence may foresee, and wisdom prevent the evils that would be produced on the one hand by a pertinacious adherence to long established though destructive and tottering institutions, and, on the other, by a forced and sudden change to a new and untried system.

We are a prosperous nation. Riches are increasing on our hands. We possess the means, or we are rapidly acquiring them, to produce forty times as much wealth as our ancestors did. But embarked as we are with all this abundant wealth on the ocean of commerce, whither is our course? The very gale of plenty that fills our sails is bearing us along to hidden shoals and engulfing breakers—England's vessel is aground amongst them already. If we would escape her fate, let us put about the helm while we may.

To speak without a metaphor—let us inquire what system of distribution adapted to the present state of science and civilization, may beneficially supersede the distribution of commerce.

It appears that we are wealthy; that, as a nation, we possess abundantly the means of continuing and increasing our wealth; and that the only real difficulty before us in our progress to permanent affluence is removed, so soon as the problem is solved: how to distribute wealth in such a manner, that the surplus produce of one producer may always procure him a just share of the surplus of his neighbours.

Let us see whether we shall derive, in the solution of this great problem, any assistance from considering the effects produced in a large family, acting on the second plan we supposed possible, (namely, the *federative* system)—by a gradual increase of productive power.

This system pre-supposes a common stock into which each producer puts the articles of wealth he creates, so soon as they are created; and from which he draws articles of necessity and comfort as he requires them. So long, therefore, as this general magazine is kept fully supplied, there can be no want or distress among the producers.

Now there might possibly have been some difficulty in obtaining supplies during a period of comparative *adversity*; that is, while production was difficult, and the demand was, therefore, beyond the supply. But in a period of *prosperity*, that is, when the world's powers of production are increasing to forty-fold, at least, what they were formerly, there can be no possible difficulty in supplying most abundantly the family storehouse; seeing that one fortieth part of the labour our ancestors must have expended to obtain this object, will suffice in our days. It appears, then, at first sight, that the *federative* system of distribution is excellently adapted to a family producing all the articles of wealth in abundance.

We have traced the results produced by the introduction of scientific power in aid of a family whose produce was distributed under the commercial system. Let us examine what effects follow this same gradual increase of powers of production under the *federative* system.

The first effect is to over-stock the common store-houses. Well, no one need starve surely on that account: on the contrary, there is an opportunity of increasing the supply of comforts to each producer, if such increase be desired; or to lay up an extra stock in case of the failure of crops and other unforeseen accidents; or to exchange the useless surplus for foreign articles of wealth, if the family desire them. It is true that men cannot use more than a certain quantity of wealth, domestic and foreign, with benefit to themselves, nor accumulate beyond a certain quantity of produce with advantage, or

indeed, with any possibility of preserving it from decay: and therefore it must be admitted that without any additional exertion on the part of the family, the increase of mechanical power would at last fairly over-supply their warehouses, so that they know not what to do with so abundant a surplus, as in England at present. And what then? Why, the remedy for this mighty evil is self-evident, and most easy and pleasant of practice, a remedy to which no one probably will object. *Let the family relax its exertions and shorten its hours of labour.* This is the only *natural* result produced by superabundance.

Can such a remedy be applied under the individual commercial system? Evidently not: each man must push on to increase his production, regardless of the consequences to society, or else competition will leave him behind to starve.

Now scientific power *must* continue and must increase: to desire that it should not, would be to wish for a gradual sinking back into ignorance and barbarism. The supply must continue to exceed the demand: to desire that it should not, would be to wish for a relapse into adversity and indigence.

But if productive powers must increase, and the supply must exceed the demand, *then the world must sooner or later, adopt some system of distribution, that, like the federative system can bear abundance and prosperity.* At present, the greatest misfortune that can befall a commercial nation, is to attain to wealth and plenty.

The United States are rapidly approaching to both. "And yet at the present moment," it will be said, "we are truly prosperous. Our condition resembles not that of Britain: no one need starve here who desires to be industrious. Our present situation, therefore, is proof of the benefits we derive from commerce."

True: but, is it possible that our present resources should remain stationary? No, nor do we desire it: they will increase, and fortunately so. What then? We shall soon rival Great Britain in all her productions. And then?—Then we shall be able to supply all our own wants, and become perfectly independent if we choose to be so, of all foreign supplies.—And afterwards? —Afterwards we may proceed to supply other nations, and spread the products of our country over all the civilized world. What then?—Must we stop here? Is there no analogy to light our steps further into futurity? There is: Britain has passed on before us, and already obtained what we anticipate. She has over-supplied herself and all her neighbours, and sent the produce of her industry to the farthest countries on the globe. And what then? She has become a national Tantalus tormented by the display of abundance she may not use, and expiring beside streams of plenty she cannot enjoy.

If a fate like this be our object, let us proceed in our present

course. We have all the advantages Great Britain ever had, and many more too: we have a liberal government, light taxes, security at home, increasing markets abroad—every thing in our favour; and we shall soon attain this envied situation—then to reflect that we have been toiling in vain—and to discover that the same commerce which *once* raised us from indigence and adversity, *now* ruins us in prosperity and amidst abundance.

New York, April, 1830.

The foregoing articles were written more than three years ago. Three years' experience has only strengthened my conviction, that the present competitive commercial system cannot go on, without a continual increase to national distress; but that experience has also somewhat shaken my faith in the practicability of introducing the community system among the adults of the present generation.

I see as clearly as I saw three years ago, that some great change must be made; I see even more clearly than I did then, that this country is, every year, sinking deeper and deeper in the miseries which commerce extracts from over-production. I see that the present commercial system will not bear prosperity; that, while it lasts, industry actually works its own destruction, by producing until its abundant produce deprives it of employment. I see that the immense modern powers of production *might* be a blessing, and that they *are* a curse. I see that machinery, instead of aiding the labourer, is brought into the market against him; and that it thus reduces his wages and injures his situation.

I see also that the co-operative system of labour, according to which each man works to supply a common storehouse, instead of working to supply a capricious market, is an effectual remedy for all this. I see that in a community of united labour and expenditure; an over-stocked market would be a real blessing, and every mechanical improvement a positive gain to the whole.

But I do *not* see, as I once thought I did, that men, with their present habits and education, are sufficiently disinterested in motive, sufficiently social in feeling, and sufficiently accommodating in disposition, to unite harmoniously as equal members of a common society, whence individual interest is banished. I do not see that the public good is a sufficiently powerful motive to replace, in ill-trained minds, the spur of individual competition. I do not see that anti-social habits can be suddenly laid aside by a body of adults, in whom they have grown with their growth and strengthened with their strength. I wish I could see and believe all this, for then I should perceive how the present state of things might be immediately and most essentially improved; but I do not.

All that, three years ago, I anticipated regarding the commercial depression of this country has been realized. The same causes which ground England's labourers to the dust, have already produced similar effects here: not indeed to the same extent, because we have freer institutions and lighter taxes; but still of the same character, and continually increasing, as in Great Britain, with the causes which first produced them.

I may be asked why I trouble the public with an explanation of the cause, since I can propose no practicable remedy, for present evils. I reply, that the first step towards curing a disease, is to understand its nature. He who shows distinctly wherein an evil consists, has not, indeed, done all, but he has done something. He has probed the wound, though he has not prescribed its treatment.

I have become very diffident in dictating specific remedies for the evils I see around me. It is so much easier to expose what is wrong, than to discover what is right—to detect an abuse, than to remove it. In curing one evil, we sometimes create a greater, and in seeking to avoid one extreme, fall into its opposite.

Still, unless remedies are offered, examined, discussed, how shall improvement ever take place. I suggest, therefore, for consideration, the following.

Is it not practicable to form communities, not on the principle of common property, but of labour for equal labour? Might not each member, without giving up his individual property or private rights, furnish to the common stock, in the produce of his particular trade, as much as he drew from it? And would not such a plan give each member the advantages of co-operative union, without depriving him of the competitive incitements to individual industry?

If each member drew from the community storehouse as much only as he placed there, no one could live in idleness on the public stock; and if in proportion to each man's industry were his receipts, his selfish interest would prompt to industry as at present. While, there being a ready mode of exchanging his particular handiwork for the various articles of necessity, the evils of an over-stocked market would be effectually avoided.

Some such modification may succeed; and some such modification is, I am convinced, necessary. Without it, each member is continually wondering whether his neighbour does as much as he; and thus there is great temptation for each to act as a spy on the other's conduct. Such a state of things too often produces jealousies and heart-burnings, and even a sort of social slavery. For though there be no legislator so just and mild, and at the same time so powerful, as *enlightened*

public opinion, there is none so over-bearing and tyrannical as ignorant public opinion; nor any to which a man of spirit and feeling will less willingly submit.

In conclusion, I would suggest to every man who wishes well to his race, the propriety of giving this subject a minute and attentive examination.

R. D. OWEN.

"What mean ye that ye beat my people to pieces, and grind the faces of the poor."—*Isaiah*.

LOOK ON THIS PICTURE!

	per annum.	per day.
Queen Victoria	£386,000	£1057 10s. 8d.
Duchess of Kent	30,000	82 3 10
Queen Adelaide	100,000	273 19 5
Duke of Cumberland	21,000	57 10 8
Archbishop of Canterbury	20,000	54 15 11
Lord Brougham*	5,000	13 13 11

AND ON THIS!

Agricultural Labourer's Annual and Daily Income.

	per annum.	per day.
Gloucestershire	£22 8s. 6d.	1s. 2½d.
Somersetshire.....	22 15 0	1 2½
Worcestershire	22 15 0	1 2½
Wiltshire	20 16 0	1 1½

The following extract, from a correspondent of the *Morning Chronicle*, will apply to all the other counties, above quoted, as well as to Wiltshire:—"I will give you but one example of the state to which the Labouring Population are reduced—it is not a picked case, but a fair specimen of the mass. Wages 8s. per week. Expenditure: rent, (say) 9d. per week; fuel, 1s. 6d.; soap, candles, &c., 9d.; leaving 5s. for food. Now, taking the family to consist of a man, his wife, and four children, (and I think the average number may be somewhat beyond this,) we see that it is just TENPENCE a week for each; or allowing them food three times a day, it will give something less than one half-penny a meal."

The Hand-Loom Weavers, in the manufacturing districts, are in a still more deplorable condition: wages less, and rent, &c., more.

* The names before Lord Brougham's have residences, &c., as well. Lord B., as a pensioner, is included, because he is the thick and thin supporter of the New Poor Law, whose scale of allowance to the destitute is about 1s. 3d. per week. The liberal conductors of *Chambers' Edinburgh Journal* think 1s. per week sufficient.—*The Publisher*.

PROSSIMO'S EXPERIENCE.

ON THE STUDY OF THEOLOGY

“SAFEST TO BELIEVE,”

or the Balance Struck.

BY R. D. OWEN.

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PROSSIMO'S EXPERIENCE.

My mother was a devoted sectarian; devout, yet I think not bigoted in her religion; and an affectionate and careful parent. She inculcated in her children, with unwearied zeal, the mysterious doctrines of her sect; and she lost no opportunity to confirm and strengthen the first impressions she had made. Was any one among us sick? she sat, hour after hour, by his bedside; and administered, by turns, temporal comforts and spiritual instruction. Had we lost a friend? his death was spoken of but as a translation to another and a better world. Did any of us ask, with childish curiosity, to be told a pretty story? it was related to us out of the Scriptural pages. We were told of the place above for the good boys and girls, and of the place below for the wicked; and when we inquired, with childish simplicity, who were the good and who the wicked, we were taught, that whoever believed that God had a son called Jesus Christ, and read the Bible with reverence every morning, and said prayers with devotion every night, was a *good* man; and that whoever disbelieved this doctrine, or neglected these forms of worship, was a wicked reprobate, called an infidel, or an unbeliever, or an atheist.

My father was not of the orthodox persuasion; but, however unwilling he might be that his children should become sectarians, he did not for many years interfere with my mother's instructions. He excited our youthful minds, indeed, to observation and inquiry; but he never called in question my mother's infallibility. His was a strong, unprejudiced, and comprehensive mind; yet either from regard to my mother's feelings or to the world's opinion, he forbore, even when our questions led to it, from undermining our belief.

I recollect, for instance, after I had listened patiently to an explanation from him how seeds produced plants and trees, and had asked him where the very—very first seeds came from, that his answer did not go to shake my belief in Moses' story of the creation. And when, on another occasion, fresh from my mother's lesson on the almighty and all-pervading power of the christian Creator, who made the sun to shine and the trees to grow, and every thing to live and move—I inquired of my father whether God went under the roots of the trees and pushed them up; I remember that he smiled, but only said, he did not know how it was done.

Thus was I left to form my own conclusions regarding my mother's religion; and she soon found me an apt scholar. I entered with zeal and earnestness into her doctrines; thought much of heaven; and prayed regularly that I might go thither when I died; read a portion of the Bible daily; and amused myself on Sundays as little as my restless spirits would permit.

When I look back on my state of mind at that period, it surprises me not so much that my reason was deceived, as that it ever escaped the deception. I was made to believe that all good, kind, benevolent, and amiable men and women, were orthodox christians. The very word *good*, I had learnt to receive as meaning *pious*. I had never, that I knew of, met with a sceptic: and imagined that one might spend a life-time, without witnessing so extraordinary and shocking a phenomenon. I lived in a religious atmosphere, and I imagined that it extended over the whole earth. I had just heard of heathens and pagans; but I thought of them only as a handful of blinded wretches, to be found shut up in some small remote quarter of a world that bowed to Christ alone as its God and Saviour. To set up my own opinion against that of all good, honest, respectable men—and indeed almost against that of the whole world—was a degree of presumption which had not even entered into my ideas to conceive.

I recollect, that when I was told of the earth's rotundity, and of our antipodes walking with their heads turned away from ours, I held out long and stoutly against the possibility of such an arrangement; and abandoned my scepticism most cautiously and unwillingly. But, for religion, I had heard it spoken of so early, and so often, and so confidently, that it did not ever occur to me that it could possibly be doubted, except from wilful wickedness or hardened depravity. Of unbelief from honest motives I had no conception; for I had never heard or thought of such a thing. Religion I knew not as a matter to be questioned, but only as a thing to be believed; for I had never been instructed to examine, but only to receive, its lessons.

I know not if I have succeeded in conveying to you an accurate idea of the state of mind in which, as a child brought up on the lap of orthodoxy, I found myself. No one, I believe, but he who has been similarly situated, can accurately conceive the situation. It is to have eyes, yet not to see; to have ears, yet not to hear; to have judgment without exercising it; and to have reasoning powers, without daring to use them.

I have often, since the time my eyes were first opened on the delusions of my infancy, reflected on that strange, unnatural state of mind. And these reflections have been thus far at least useful to me, that I have learnt never to express, nor even to feel, anger—nay, scarcely impatience, towards those whom I see similarly deluded.

I believe my logical powers were naturally respectable, if not strong. My curiosity, on every subject, was great. But neither natural powers of reasoning, nor a natural spirit of inquiry proved of the least avail, for many years in shaking my belief. Those very absurdities which have since appeared to me so bare-faced, that a simple statement of their meaning might well suffice as a refutation, I then received almost without doubt or question. If any rational friend had but reminded me, that a creed may be false however popular, the charm might have been broken; but there was none, who even hinted at error or deception.

One day, at length, it chanced that a discussion arose between my father and a gentleman who was then a visiter at our house, and that I was present. In the course of the debate, my father expressed very heterodox opinions, and I was not slow to discover their heterodoxy. I was then not more than ten or eleven years of age; but my father had always encouraged me to speak freely before him; so that I scrupled not, during a pause in the conversation, to reply in a convincing manner, as I thought, to some of my father's heresies. I recollect that our visiter was delighted; and encouraged me by word and gesture to proceed; to the no small increase of my vanity and self-importance. My father did not check me, but replied very patiently to my arguments; his replies left me much to think upon.

The next day I had a lecture from my mother on the danger of self-sufficiency, and was told that little boys must listen, but not mix in serious conversation. However, this did not satisfy me. I began to question my mother very closely regarding my father's opinions; and at last I learnt from her, with surprise almost amounting to horror, that she doubted whether my father firmly believed that Jesus Christ was the son of God!

Here was a confounding of all my pre-conceived ideas. My father was universally respected as a man of talent; and I loved him as an affectionate and indulgent parent. My mother, too, swayed as well by her affection for my father, as by her fear that the disclosure of his heterodoxy might weaken the paternal authority, softened the enormity of his religious heresies by repeating to me again and again, that, but for these, my father was every thing that was amiable and estimable. "Were he but a christian," said she mournfully, "he would be all that my heart could desire; but, alas! in spite of his warm affections, and noble qualities, and great talents, he is but lost and undone. Pray to God, my child," she continued, "that he will turn your dear father's heart from the error of his ways; that he will teach him those holy truths, which worldly wisdom and prudence cannot teach; and make him at last a partaker in those joys, which the world can neither give nor take away." And my mother wept as she said it.

I was deeply affected and exceedingly perplexed. My father, good, kind, respected as he was, an infidel! It was very strange. All my ideas of good and evil were, for a time, turned topsyturvy. I had heard of savages with their tomahawks and their painted faces and their cloaks of skins. And I had occasionally seen, through the iron bars, as I passed our county jail, some dark, suspicious-looking, ragged offenders, such as I thought I would have shuddered to meet in a lonely lane on a dark night. And these I could have imagined infidels. But a good infidel; a kind infidel; a respectable infidel! It had never entered into my imagination to conceive such a thing; any more than to conceive of a quiet storm, or cold heat, or transparent darkness, or any other similar absurdity. It was some time before I could convince myself of the possibility of such a phenomenon. At first, it was rather by passive belief, than positive conviction. I looked often at my father. But he talked and smiled as usual; and there was no cloven foot to be seen; nor any sinister inference to be drawn from his quiet, pleasant demeanor.

I was completely at fault. At length, after many sage reflections and wise conjectures, I arrived at the conclusion, that my father's ignorance and blindness could not be wilful. "He is too good a man," thought I, "to sin on purpose. I dare say no one ever took the trouble to explain holy things to him, as my mother did to me." This I settled very conclusively with myself; and then I began to consider, if there was no remedy for this sad misfortune. I mused long and often on the matter; and the more I mused, the more plainly I saw the vast importance of saving my father's soul. At last, warmed with the idea of the great good I should effect, "I will myself," cried I, "become the instrument of my father's conversion. I will talk to him of religion, and convince him—I know I can—of its truth; and then he will not be sent to hell when he dies."

I was mightily pleased with myself after I had come to this notable resolution. I summoned to my recollection all my mother's strongest arguments—arranged them in the order I intended to bring them forward, imagined my father's replies, and already anticipated my own triumph and my mother's joy, when I should have brought my father to confess his errors and to repent of his heresies.

I told you, that I had resolved to convince and convert my father. I say, resolved to *convert him*, rather than resolve to *attempt his conversion*; for so I put it to myself; being too young, and too ignorant, and too zealous, to experience either doubts or diffidence. A man usually learns a good deal, before he learns modesty.

And then, I had very specious grounds to support my un-

doubting presumption of success. Never was young neophyte more confident in the strength of a good cause. I was convinced that God was exceedingly interested in this matter; and I felt assured that, as my pious undertaking was good and praiseworthy in his sight, he would assist me in its execution, and at last crown it with success. I did not forget that I was young, and I had some confused idea that grown up people were wiser and more knowing than I: "But what of that?" I said to myself; "those holy things which God has hidden from the wise and prudent, he himself tells us, he reveals unto babes." And I was not slow to believe, that I must be among the favoured number.

Then too—for the sake of truth let me confess it—to my disinterested care for my father's soul came the more selfish desire to ensure the safety of my own. I had heard a hundred times from my mother, that I was a miserable sinner; and at last I had begun to believe it: the more readily, that I felt a great inclination to break the Lord's sabbath, by trundling a hoop, or playing at foot-ball, or engaging in some other favourite game; and that I frequently yawned during our Sunday evening lectures, and sometimes even fell asleep during the family prayer with which these were wont to conclude—all which wicked inclinations, my mother had assured me, were convincing proofs of the innate depravity which I had inherited from my forefather Adam, and should carry with me to my grave. Now, thoughtless though I was in many things, I was yet greatly concerned to find some good deed that might secure me a place among God's angels, notwithstanding the grievous nature of my Sunday sins.

Such a good deed I conceived my father's conversion to be. I had read from the Bible: "He that converteth a sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." I had, I believe, too, a lurking idea that, on the strength of this latter clause, "it shall hide a multitude of sins," I might venture an occasional infringement on the monotony of Sunday, without any great risk of the consequences at the day of judgment. If I recollect aright, this latter idea had considerable weight with me; for, as I told you, my spirits were of the most restless order, and could very ill brook the grave restraints and long sermons of a presbyterian sabbath; so that a breach of the fourth commandment was, in truth, my besetting sin.

Actuated and encouraged by these various considerations, I prepared to commence my task. One fine summer evening, my father took me to walk with him, as was his custom; and I deemed this a fit opportunity for my purpose. Every circumstance of the conversation that ensued is yet stamp on my mind. I recollect the very spot where I first began it. 'Twas

in a little wood that skirted the lawn before our house, and extended thence over a sloping bank close down to a small but romantic stream. I could yet point to the very tree by which we passed, as I turned to my father, and asked him, with infinite earnestness of manner, and with no little trepidation of heart, "whether he disbelieved that Jesus Christ was the Son of God?"

My father was doubtless not a little surprised; but he did not immediately reply. "Why do you ask me that question?" he said at last.

"Because I am sure"—I began eagerly—

"That he *is* God's son?" asked my father, smiling.

"Yes, I am."

"Did you ever hear of the Mahometans?" said my father, while I had paused to collect my proofs.

"I had just heard of such a people," I said, "who lived some where far off."

"Do you know what their religion is?"

"No."

"They believe that Jesus Christ is not the Son of God, but that another person, called Mahomet, is God's chosen prophet."

"Do they not believe the Bible?" asked I, somewhat aghast.

"No; Mahomet wrote a book called the Koran; and the Mahometans say that is the word of God. And that book tells them, that God sent Mahomet upon earth to preach the gospel to them, and to save their souls."

Wonders crowded so fast upon me, that I could scarcely reply. Here was a rival Bible, and a rival Saviour. And what had I to say against them? At last I ventured to ask, "Are you *quite* sure, father, that this is true?"

"Yes, my dear, I am quite sure."

"And how many Mahometans are there?"

"About as many Mahometans as there are Christians; probably one hundred and fifty millions. Now," continued my father, "how do you know which God sent upon earth, Jesus Christ or Mahomet?"

This was a question for which I was totally unprepared. I did not attempt to answer it; and was silent during the rest of our walk, scarcely replying in monosyllables when my father spoke to me.

And so ended my scheme for my father's conversion.

After this attempt, I did not, for many months, seek to renew the argument with my father; and he, on his part, never pressed the subject upon me. But I listened, and thought, and doubted, more than had been my wont; and I spoke less.

It was strange that this single, little simple question, "How do you know which God sent upon earth, Jesus Christ or Mahomet?" should have ultimately shaken the faith which my

mother had been years in planting, and which she had sought to cherish and confirm by every argument that zeal could dictate, or affection suggest; a faith that had grown with my growth, and strengthened with my strength, so that I cannot call to mind the time when I was free from its influences. Yet so it was. My father, either with or without design, had laid the axe at the very root of my religion; and though I was myself unconscious, even for years afterwards, of its effect, yet did the whole tree wither and die of that single blow at last. My religion had taken root upon faith; that is, upon authority; and a doubt of that authority was fatal to its existence.

Yet let it not be supposed that I gave up the creed of my youth, without a long and painful struggle. Years passed before I could fully persuade myself, that I was an unbeliever; and years were added to these, before I confessed my heresy to others.

At first, all was painful doubt and obscure uncertainty. I felt, as a mariner might who had approached the pole, and found the magnetic needle, hitherto his trusted and trustworthy guide, prove fallible or false. And for the polar star of truth, my reason was too clouded to admit its rays. Compass and star both failed me at once, and seldom was benighted sailor in a more cheerless situation than I.

Months passed, and found me diligently reading my Bible, now for the first time inquiringly, rather than submissively; and praying regularly, with all the sincerity of a child, that God would enable me to find out whether he had written that Bible or not. As I read, I was often astonished and sometimes startled at the incongruities, which even my immature reason began to discover in the scriptural pages. Long, long I hesitated between two opinions. At last, I gave up reading the Bible; for I thought that the more I read and prayed, the less I believed: and I began to fear, that I might thus, at last, lose my religion altogether; a consummation which I most devoutly and earnestly deprecated.

But though I ceased to read, I could not cease to think and to speculate and to doubt; the less, that I was now frequently present during some very free discussions between my father and several of his friends. To these I lent an eager ear, and an interested attention; and I began gradually to suspect, that my father, in many of his arguments, was wonderfully rational and consistent.

On the other hand, my mother, who, after some time, began I believe to suspect that all was not right, was unceasing in her efforts to strengthen my faith. She had always considered me, as she told me afterwards, the most devout among her children; she had always found me the most careful for the future welfare of my soul, the most earnest in my zeal for the things of

another world, and the most attentive to her pious homilies and maternal exhortations. Even now, that her words fell on my ear without the sanction of infallibility, I listened with patience, if not with reverence; and perhaps even with more strict attention than formerly. But I said nothing. I did not, by word or gesture, evince my growing scepticism; but neither did I, as I had formerly done, profess any zeal for religion, or veneration for its doctrines. I can say—I fear somewhat proudly—that I never, in a single instance, deceived my mother or any other human being, on a point of conscience. I feared, at times, even my own thoughts; and I feared yet more my mother's sorrowing indignation, if she should learn my apostasy. And my fear kept me silent. Yet did they never extort from me one word to belie my sincerity.

By slow, and scarcely perceptible degrees, my opinions at length began to assume a more decided tone. The doctrine of eternal punishment, if I recollect aright, was the first that staggered my young credulity: and this the more readily, that my feelings came in aid of my reason against it.

I had a good-natured orthodox tutor, who took infinite pains to teach me Greek and Latin, but seldom meddled with my spiritual education. His creed, so far as I could discover, was that of the established church, and he had studied to qualify himself as one of its ministers; but he was mild in the expression of his opinions, and tolerant towards others. I was thus encouraged to suggest some of my doubts to him. "Mr. M—," said I to him one day, as we were walking together, "I find it very difficult to understand some things, which the Bible tells us. He invited me to state my difficulties, and I proceeded. "It tells us that God sends all unbelievers to hell when they die, and that he makes them remain there for ever tormented in the flames. Now at the time God creates an unbeliever, he must know that he will be obliged, in a few years, to send him to hell. Therefore I think it would be better if he did not make any unbelievers at all.

"But" said my tutor, "you know that God puts it in our power to save ourselves; and, if we neglect so to do, it is our fault, not his."

"But yet," persisted I, "God was not obliged to create an unbeliever; he might have prevented any such from being born, and then he would have prevented them from being wicked, and from going to hell. Would it not have been better for such men never to have been born, than to live a few years here, and then be tormented for ever?"

My tutor's silence seemed to give assent. "Well then," I concluded, "if it would have been better, why did not God do it?"

"I cannot tell you;" my tutor said at last with some hesita-

tion. "And I advise you not to think of such things as these. It *seems* better to our human reason; but it cannot *be* better, or else God would have done so."

I was totally dissatisfied with this answer; and from that day I became a universalist.

I was emboldened by the conversation with my tutor, to speak somewhat more freely to others. Yet was it very gradually and cautiously. I had begun, indeed, to doubt the infallibility of the Scriptures; but I still retained much of that reverence for them, which, if once carefully implanted in early youth, will outlive a conviction of its groundlessness. I treated the Bible like some old friend, for whose faults I had always an excuse prepared, and whom I was unwilling to believe frail or false. When some flagrant incongruity stared me in the face, I thought it might be an error in the translation; or, if unable otherwise to explain some unjust or intolerant passage, I set it down as an eastern metaphor. Even when doubts pressed most strongly upon me, I could not find it in my heart to yield implicitly to their influence: and I came at last to the resolution: "I will suspend my judgment."

When I look back on this period of my life, I am forcibly reminded of the heavy responsibilities of parents. Parents give early impressions; and early impressions touch both reason and heart, with a power which years of mature reflection can hardly destroy. When early impressions, then, are prejudices, with what a mental load does the child enter on the journey of life! The free step is shackled, and the independent thought crushed, by their weight. The first and best efforts of the young mind are often exhausted, not in the race of science or in the pursuit of just knowledge, but in shaking off the fetters that would impede its progress. Happy he, who stands free and unbound, before youth is past, or opportunity gone by!

It is not my intention, Messrs. Editors, to repeat, in detail, the course of reasoning that gradually dissipated my religion; nor to relate how I became, by degrees, more decided in my scepticism, and bolder in its expression. Nor will I obtrude on your readers the history of my fears and difficulties, as I proceeded; how, when I first disclosed to my mother the heresies of her child, she wept and warned, and threatened me with a troubled conscience in this world, and a portion with the devil and his angels in the next; how she exhorted and implored, with that solicitude, which perhaps a mother only can feel, that I would submit my rebellious heart and presumptuous reason before the throne of him, whose mysteries it was impious alike to examine as to reject; and how it required months of earnest exhortation on her part, and painful resolution on mine, to convince her that I was as decided as I was sincere.

Enough, I am now a sceptic. I live for this world, because

I know nothing of any other. I doubt all revelations from heaven, because they appear to me improbable and inconsistent. I desire to see the thoughts and efforts of mankind directed solely to the improvement of their own and their fellow-creatures' condition on this earth; for I think it requires much improvement. I desire to see men's wishes bounded by what they can see and know; for I am convinced that they would thus become more contented, more practically benevolent, and more permanently happy, than any dreams of futurity can make them.

It is to me a pleasant reflection, that among the friends whose affection I possessed, and whose esteem I valued, I have not lost *one* by my scepticism. Many a long argument I have had with the more orthodox among them; but our arguments never terminated bitterly. My mother never loved me the less, and I almost believe, that at last she esteemed me the more, for my heresy. I did not find it difficult to persuade her, nor any one else who was sincerely interested in my welfare, that I *could* not change my opinions; and that to say I was religious, would be only to add hypocrisy to infidelity. Thus, instead of resenting the expression of my opinion, they only lamented its existence. And perhaps concluded with the assertion: "That they were sure one so truly desirous of discovering truth as I certainly was, could not fail at last to win the grace of God; and to find the object of my search in that holy book, where alone it was to be found."

It is many years since my opinions have given me, even for a moment, anxiety or uneasiness. And I am bold to say, that no one can attain to the serenity and contentment of mind, and to the unshackled freedom of spirit which these opinions produce, without saying, with me, that if it were possible to exchange them again for orthodoxy, the wealth of the Indies would poorly compensate the exchange.

It was the perfect conviction I entertain of the mental and moral advantages which I have gained by a change of opinion, that first induced me to note down this sketch of my conversion for the public eye. And it is the same conviction which bids me hope, that it will not be without interest, nor without utility to many; especially to those who still stand on the bank of the Rubicon, and who fear to try their strength in its waves, lest they be carried away by the current, and thrown on some treacherous quicksand, or arid desert.

I have crossed in safety, and found the opposite shore fair and pleasant: a land of freedom and of virtue, whence terror is banished, and where tranquility reigns. He that is a bold swimmer, let him fearlessly attempt the passage. He will never regret the efforts it may cost him. He will become a better, a wiser, and—my experience for it—a happier man.

PROSSIMO.

ON THE STUDY OF THEOLOGY.

HE who should study the manners and customs of the moon's inhabitants, and seek to elucidate their history, ancient and modern, would lose his time and talents.

If we saw a man prosecuting with infinite zeal and industry such a study as this, and knew that immense funds were employed to assist him in doing so, we should not stop to inquire whether his researches in the moon had been successful, but we should at once decide that the pursuit was vain and the money grievously misapplied.

The students in the science of theology appear to be similarly situated. Theology, as the name indicates, is the study of God; just as we say geology, the study of the earth; mineralogy, the study of minerals; zoology, the study of animals; and many other similar studies. Now we can discover something about the earth, and about the minerals and the animals it contains, because we can examine them through the medium of our senses. Let us see how it is with theology, or the study of God.

We cannot, as we all know, see or hear God, or discover him by any of our senses; so that the only medium by which we might obtain a knowledge of his nature and qualities is wanting. This circumstance alone is sufficient to detract largely from the certainty, and, therefore, from the utility, of the science.

If God exist with a nature and attributes of which we can understand nothing, then theology is positively a superhuman study; and as such it were folly that it should engage one moment of a man's attention.

But let us suppose, if we can, that the nature and the qualities of the mind of the Deity may be conceived, either in whole or in part, by mortals; and that, therefore, we may examine and judge them. Then it is certain that God did not intend mankind generally to know any thing about himself; for, he first of all renders himself inscrutable by the senses of man, while every thing else which man studies may be directly perceived by one or other of his senses, and then he does not speak to man in order to supply the deficiency.

If I am to be told that I, as a man, ought not to judge of the actions and intentions of Deity, seeing that his ways are not as my ways nor his thoughts as my thoughts, I reply that, in that case, I ought not to approach the subject at all, or to

think or speak about it. The error is with them who require me to judge in such a case, and not with me. Am I to be asked to judge and then told that I may not exercise my judgment? I might as well be required to see and not use my eyes, and to hear but not with my ears.

We are told that "though God does not now reveal himself to man, he did formerly speak to his favoured prophets and chosen disciples." If he did so, that was evidence enough to them, and they doubtless could profit by it. But for us it is totally useless. I cannot see with another man's eyes nor hear with another man's ears, nor perceive with another man's sensations any revelation that may have been made to him. If God spoke to these men, he intended, probably, that they should know something about that nature which he has so completely concealed from the rest of mankind; but he has not spoken to me, so that I am not among the number of those whom he wishes to instruct in a knowledge of himself.

To say that he has left me to find it out as well as I can from remote testimony and obscure traditions, is a positive libel on his common sense. What! to leave a matter of such vital importance as the knowledge of himself and of his will is, so doubtful that years must be passed in examining the proofs of the authenticity of traditionary sayings, clothed in eastern similes and hid in parables! and to make heaven the reward of him who can best read the riddle! What must be the caprice of a God who would act such a part towards his erring creatures.

It is evident, therefore, as evident at least as any thing of the kind can be, that God, if he exist, did not intend to make his existence known to us: we may most logically conclude that he does not wish us to know him.

If I spoke the language of theologians, then I would say that their science is a warring against God, an impious attempt to penetrate a veil which he has himself hung between his own being and the creatures of his hand. But not speaking that language, I merely remark that I regret to see men wasting their time and their talents, and expending their money in researches out of this world, and in attempting discoveries in regions where our senses refuse their office and where we can procure no guide but imagination.

But this is not all. Suppose that we could understand something about the nature and the will of Deity, and that he communicated information to us regarding that nature and that will; grant that we could conceive the excellence of his goodness, the perfection of his intelligence, and the wonders of his works. We should then have discovered how God thinks and speaks and wills and acts; but what is that to us? Can we suppose the divine nature so like to ours that it will serve *us* for an example? God's nature and excellence, whatever they be, are

the nature and excellence of God, not of man. Such excellence may do for other gods to imitate, but not for man to follow; the nature of Deity cannot be a light to *his* paths.

Man must look among the wise and the virtuous of his own species for examples of wisdom and virtue; not among the brutes, for their nature is beneath him; nor among the gods, for their attributes are beyond his reach.

These are the reasons which induce me to believe that theological knowledge is unattainable even if it were useful, and useless though it could be attained.

R. D. O.

“SAFEST TO BELIEVE.”

It has often been argued that credulity is safer than scepticism—that “it is safest to believe;” inasmuch as if a man believe in heaven and hell, and there be no such places, he is, if no gainer, at least no loser; whereas the infidel may lose, and cannot gain. Upon the same principle, it were safest to believe all the religions of the world at once—Christian, Mahomedan, Jewish, Hindoo, Confucian, and all the rest; because it is but insuring the matter by halves to trust to one only. If Allah be not the only God, and Mahomet be an impostor, there is no harm done, nothing lost; and if there be not a paradise in another world, there has been a pleasant dream of anticipated joys in this.

Let us ask, is the balance of profit and loss fairly struck? Are the chances all in favour of the religionist, and all against the sceptic? Is there nothing to be thrown into the opposite scale? Surely, much. If religion be a fallacy, it is a fallacy pregnant with mischief. It excites fears that are without foundation; it fosters feelings of separation between the believer and the unbeliever; it consumes valuable time, that can never be recalled, and valuable talents, that ought to be better employed; it draws money from our pockets to support a deception; it teaches the elect to look upon their less fortunate fellow-men as heathens and castaways, living in sin here, and doomed to perdition hereafter; it awakens harassing doubts, gloomy despondency, and fitful melancholy; it turns our thoughts from the things of the world, where alone true knowledge is to be found; it speaks of temporal misery and temporal pleasures as less than

nothing and vanity, and thus fosters indifference to the causes of the weal and woe of mankind; worse than all, it chains us down to antiquated orthodoxy, and forbids the free discussion of those very subjects which it most concerns us to discuss. If religion be a fallacy, its votaries are slaves.

Whereupon, then, rests the assertion, that if the religionist do not gain, he cannot lose? Is it nothing to lose time and talents, to waste our labour upon that which is not bread, and our money upon that which profiteth not? Is it nothing to feel that the human beings that surround us are children of the devil, heirs of hell, and sons of perdition? Is it nothing to think that we may perhaps look across the great gulf and see some one we have loved on earth, tormented in a fiery lake; and hear him ask us to dip a finger in water that it may cool his parched tongue? Is it no loss to live in disquiet by day, and in fear by night; to pass through dark seasons of doubt and temptation, and to be conscious that we are but as strangers and pilgrims here, toiling through a weary valley of cares and sorrows? Is it no loss to hold back when truth oversteps the line of orthodoxy, and, when there ought to be free discussion, to shrink before we know not what? Is all this no loss? Or, is it not rather the loss of all that a free and a rational being most values?

R. D. O.

Just published,

A SERMON ON LOYALTY:

A REMONSTRANCE TO GOD:

AND A SERMON ON FREE ENQUIRY.

BY R. D. OWEN.

Watson, Printer, 15, City Road.

DARBY AND SUSAN.

A Tale of Old England

Foul superstition ! howsoever disguised,
Idol, saint, virgin, prophet, crescent, cross,
For whatsoever symbol thou art prized,
Thou sacerdotal gain, but general loss !
Who from true worship's gold can separate thy dross ?

Byron

BY R. D. OWEN.

London :

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J. WATSON, 15, CITY ROAD, FINSBURY

DARBY AND SUSAN.

THERE lived, in a pretty rural village, a homely, industrious, sensible, and contented couple, Darby and Susan.

The tidy cottage that stood beside the village green, with the moss rose-bush and the sweetbriar before it, and the gravelled path edged with rows of box that led to its rustic porch, and the honeysuckle climbing over the walls, till it half hid the little arched windows, and stretched its fragrant tendrils up to the brown thatch—that was their cottage. It was their garden that looked so gay and neat behind that pretty cottage; and it was their cow that fed in the little pasture beside it.

Darby and Susan were, in truth, a notable and a happy couple. Nobody brought such sweet-scented hay to market as honest Darby, for so his neighbours were wont to call him; and not undeservedly; for nobody gave juster weight or fuller measure than he, in all the country round. Susan's fame had gone far and wide. She was a very pattern of housewives: up with the day, at work like her own bees, and as merry as the lark when it rises in the summer sunbeams. No honey was so transparent as that from Susan's hives; no cheese or butter, in all the parish, so good, as that she made. Her 'kerchief was the whitest at the village festival, and her step the lightest at the village dance. You might hear, as you passed her door, the busy hum of her wheel; and no lass, within twenty miles of that village, spun a smoother thread, or a stronger. You might hear, too, at intervals, a song, whose merry tones cheered your very heart; and that was Susan's, the sweetest and the blithest singer in all the country side.

Darby always found a well-swept hearth, and a blazing fire, and a pair of laughing eyes, when he returned from market, cold and weary. And a blazing fire and laughing eyes are excellent specifics against care and dulness. As he sat, in the long winter evenings, plating willow baskets, while his notable partner spread the spotless napkin and arranged his frugal supper, you might scarcely chance upon a happier man. And, after supper, when Susan always sung her merriest ditties,

Darby would listen for hours, and forget to tell the strokes of the village clock. He was surely not sentimental, and he had heard all her songs for the hundredth time. Yet would his neighbours roguishly tell, that as they stopped before Darby's window to catch the last words of some favourite old ballad, they had seen him lay down his half-finished basket, and slip behind Susan's chair, to steal a kiss, with almost as much fondness, though certainly with less awkward bashfulness, than when he stole the first from her rosy lips.

Around, as within the cottage,—on Darby's little farm and in Susan's garden, every thing spoke the careful eye and the busy hand of its possessors. Their thoughts, indeed centered in their pleasant home; and for the world beyond, it was to them as though it existed not, except when Darby filled Dobbin's panniers, and proceeded to dispose of the produce of their industry, and to gaze for the thousandth time with undiminished wonder on the marvels and the rary-shows of a market town. Yet, even there, Darby seldom saw a merrier eye or a rosier cheek than his pretty Susan's, and seldom found a neater garden or a tidier home than his own: and so Darby was not given to inconstancy.

Thus passed their quiet lives, without fear for the future or regret for the past; with scarcely a wish beyond their little possessions, and scarcely a care beyond the passing hour. They lived in the present, and enjoyed it undisturbed by dreams of rich inheritance, either in this world, or the next.

It chanced, one dark November evening, that a stranger rode into the village. He wore a long black Spanish-looking cloak; and the boys, attracted by the unusual sight, followed him to the door of the village inn, where he alighted. As he entered the busy kitchen, he threw aside his upper garment, discovering beneath a dress of the same colour, very plainly cut, and somewhat threadbare. There was a merry party gathered round a fire that blazed and sparkled as a November fire ought; and there the officious landlady placed a chair for the stranger, who saluted the circle with a solemn "God be with you!" and then seated himself in silence.

The laugh and the jest were hushed in a moment; each jogged his neighbour with a side glance at their visitor; and, after a few common-places about the weather and the crops, first one, and then another, rose and departed.

"Who can he be?" said the landlady to her help-mate, as the last guest prepared to retire.

"Ask him," was the laconic reply.

But this was not so easy, even for the assurance of Mrs. Margery. Her first remark about the weather was answered in a monosyllable; and there the conversation ended; for the landlady thought, as she expressed it afterwards, "that he was an

uncomfortable looking man;" and so she smothered her curiosity, and left him to his own meditations.

Margery's remark was not inapplicable to the stranger. His figure was tall and spare, and he stooped from his shoulders. Care was imprinted on the wrinkled brow, over which his straight black hair was formally combed; and care and restlessness were in his dark gray eyes. There was a strange, absent, uneasy swimming expression, too, about those eyes. You might at times have imagined they were turned on the inward man, rather than occupied in scanning outward objects; so dead and unsettled they seemed. And then again you might have supposed that they looked through the vulgar realities of sense to something of a vaguer nature, distant and longed for and unseen; for in the frequent fixedness of his gaze, there was rather the excitement of eager and dissatisfied expectation, than the calmer expression of actual perception.

Let it not be imagined that all these reflections passed through Margery's brain, and elicited the remark, "that he was an uncomfortable looking man." No; she was not one of those who looked beyond the outward show; but the outward show of that pale, thin visage, and gaunt figure, was unpromising enough.

And, in truth, the appearance of the stranger did not belie his avocation. His labours and his thoughts were not of this world. His body, indeed, sojourned on our earth, but his spirit had wandered out of it. He walked through life with the careless indifference of a hasty pilgrim, who scarcely bestows a glance or a thought on the scenes that open around him; so deeply and solely occupied is his imagination with other lands and future prospects. He walked through life, not only without tasting its joys, but even unconscious that it contained any. As he conceived it the duty, so he made it the business of his life, to render others as careless of time and its labours and its pleasures, and as careful for eternity, as he was himself. In a word, he was a preacher—a zealous, enthusiastic, untiring, consistent preacher.

The morning after his arrival, Jem, the town-crier, sallied forth with a manuscript in one hand, and his well known bell in the other; Jem was considered, and he considered himself, a scholar. Yet he combed his task for the space of several minutes, puzzling over the hurried abbreviations it contained, and the blots that disfigured it, before he contrived to inform the curious and impatient crowd which had meanwhile gathered around him, "that a friend to the welfare of their eternal souls would meet them, God willing, in the parish church an hour before curfew."

"Darby," said Susan, as they returned to their cottage, after listening to Jem's oratory, "what does all this mean?"

"Did not you hear what Jem said?" rejoined her partner

"To be sure I did. He said somebody would meet us in the church. But what can we do in the church to-day? It's only Thursday. What could the man mean?"

"He meant what he said," replied Darby very sagely. "He meant, that somebody would preach in the church to-night."

"La! Darby! To-night! on Thursday night!"

"Why not?"

"Why not? How droll you are! Who ever heard of preaching except on Sunday? What would be the use of it?"

"The use? why, what's the use of it on Sundays?"

"Oh fie! Darby. You know it's *proper* to preach on Sunday; and you know it's *proper* for us to go to church then. But we need not go to-day."

"No," said Darby, as they entered the cottage, "we need not."

"But must I put on my Sunday gown if I go?" And Susan carefully took down a new straw bonnet, with bright yellow ribbons, that hung, pinned up in a white handkerchief, against the wall.

"Just as you like," said Darby.

"But won't the neighbours laugh if I wear my Sunday bonnet on a Thursday?" persisted Susan; at the same time smoothing and adjusting the rumpled bows

"I don't know," replied he.

"But, if it's proper to preach to-day," reasoned Susan, "it must be proper to wear a Sunday bonnet too."

"I suppose so," said Darby.

"Then let's go," said Susan. "I'll put off my churning till to-morrow, and iron a clean shirt for you; and you'll come home at five o'clock; and we'll dress, and go."

Susan was not the only one who was startled at this innovation on week-day customs. The villagers generally did not know what to make of it. Their own curate, a quiet, easy, good-tempered soul, who left his parishioners to arrange their eternal concerns, each according to his own fancy, never preached but once a week, on Sunday morning; and no itinerant preacher had ever yet visited the remote village. But a few of the more travelled having averred that, in other towns and villages, they had heard men preach on Tuesday, on Wednesday, on Friday, and, indeed, they believed, on every day of the week, the majority concluded that, at least, there could be no great harm in it, though it was Thursday. So the day's work was hurried over; and, at six o'clock, the church was nearly filled.

If you had chanced to walk into that old cathedral-looking building, with its ancient gray aisles, and its well worn stone floor, and its small paned gothic windows, on a fine Sunday morning at half-past ten o'clock, you might have witnessed a cheerful, if not a merry scene. As the eastern sunbeams streamed,

in checkered rays, through the dusky pile, and fell on the faces and forms of the assembled audience, with all the painting-like effect of bold broad lights and shades, you might have fancied each quiet, silent group, a study for a master's pencil. It was not the silence of gloomy contemplation. There was still expression enough to interest the spectator. The hale, smiling old dame, her snow-white cap peeping from beneath her ancient bonnet, sat thinking over the tale of olden times, which she had been relating to a neighbour gossip, as they had walked slowly together to the house of prayer. The half-bashful, half-laughing lass, still pondered over the homely jokes and rustic efforts at gallantry, with which her favoured swain had wiled away their morning's stroll; while he sat in a neighbouring pew, his face turned towards her, and his eyes, it would seem, intently fixed in study on an old, dark-red, well-worn prayer-book, which he held up before him with both hands; although, as his sister who sat next him archly told after they left the church, "Harry's prayer-book was turned upside down, and you could see him looking over it, just as our old grandmother looked up over her spectacles at the minister, when he began his sermon."

And if, as the service proceeded, the various expressions sobered down into the vacant look of indifference, or into the drowsy, half-repressed yawn, still there was nothing like ascetic gravity, or bigoted severity of countenance in all that congregation; for, in truth, there was nothing in their jovial, pleasant looking curate, to awaken either fear, enthusiasm, or austerity. He read over the service of the day in the same tone of voice, (only somewhat shriller and weaker,) and with the very same accent and emphasis, as he had read it twenty years before. He was a very regular man, that jolly curate; regular at his meals, regular in his yearly visits to his parishioners, above all regular in his sermons. His stock of sermons held out precisely two years; and so scrupulously did the good man adhere to the order of succession which he had once for all prescribed to himself, that several of his veteran parishioners were able to foretell, with unerring accuracy, not only the text, but even the length of the sermon, before they entered the church; an effort of memory which obtained for them no little share of respect and admiration from their juniors in age and experience.

Well might the appearance of the reverend stranger, then, form an era in the village history; and little wonder that older and sager heads than the pretty Susan's were puzzled to conceive what it could mean. They had gone to church all their lives on Sunday morning, because, as Susan said, it was proper to go. Their curate had read prayers and sermons to them, because it was proper for a curate to do so: and they had returned home, satisfied to have completed their Sunday morning's occupation. To have absented themselves, would have

been very wrong and wicked; because Sunday morning was meant for people to go to church in; and Susan would almost as soon have omitted to feed and milk her favourite cow, or Darby have forgotten his regular trip to market, as that either had missed their weekly devotions.

But Thursday was not meant for a preaching day; and, even if it had been, it was not a stranger's business to preach to them. One old man observed, that, for his part, he wished people would be content, as their fathers and mothers had done before them, to put every day to its proper use; while another remarked, that he thought it little better than Sabbath-breaking to employ the church on a week day.

But curiosity ultimately silenced all scruples. They were to hear a sermon which the oldest parishioner had never heard before; and the very text of which they were unable to foretell. The appearance of the preacher, too, as he had sauntered in reverie through the village during the forenoon, had awakened an interest not unmingled with dread, so dark and severe-looking he seemed; so totally different from their own good, easy pastor.

"Darby," said Susan, as they entered the church, "is not it for all the world like Sunday? It's very droll. I'm sure I shall lose count of the days this week altogether. I shall be thinking that to-morrow's Monday; and I dare say I shall forget my churning, for you know I never churn on Monday"—

"Hush," said her partner; and he pointed to the spare stooping form of the stranger, as he advanced to the steps of the pulpit. "Hush, and sit down."

It needed not a second warning to arrest poor Susan's loquacity. Her eyes met those of the preacher, and she shrunk back in actual terror from that unearthly, ascetic gaze.

If the stranger's appearance had awakened curiosity and fixed attention, the manner and the matter of his delivery were well calculated to confirm the impression. After a few minutes, past apparently in silent devotion, he suddenly rose, stretched forward his long thin arms, closed his eyes, and in a low, solemn, earnest tone, commenced an extempore prayer. His audience was electrified. Scarcely one among the number knew that there were any prayers but those contained in their prayer books; and, under other circumstances, perhaps, they might have been scandalized to hear a man address the Deity in other words than those the church had sanctified; and address him, too, in a tone of mingled complaint and confidence. But the preacher's earnest sincerity, and his impressive manner, extinguished every feeling of disapproval, and carried his hearers along with him. As he became warmed in animation, and in impassioned accents called on him who rides on the tempest's wing and speaks in its thunders, to bend the heavens and come down among the sinful creatures of his hand; to snatch them

from the evils and miseries that await the unregenerated sinner, and to rescue their souls from the pit that yawned before them; his congregation involuntarily followed the direction of his eyes, half-expecting some special revelation of the divine presence amongst them; and when at last he closed his prayer, they sat in silent and breathless expectation of what they next might hear.

The preacher's text was from Matthew xvi. 26. "*What is a man profited if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*"

He read his text twice, paused, looked on the assembled audience, it seemed with a mixed feeling of sorrow and interest, and then proceeded:

"There was a man who wandered into a strange country. He found it populous and fertile, its fields fair to the eye, and its pleasures pleasant to the senses. He was a man who loved his fellow mortals, and wished them well; and who felt in his heart a willingness to sacrifice much for their happiness. He remarked, that the inhabitants of that country were continually changing; no one remained there more than one day, and that day each usually spent in singing and feasting and making merry with his friends. On the morrow he passed away, and the next day his very existence was forgotten. This grieved that man's benevolent heart, he sought to discover whither these travellers went, and what became of them.

"After much diligent inquiry, he found that they all journeyed towards a dark valley, the entrance to which was covered with goodly garden-trees and tempting groves of spices; but within there was a tangled growth of thorns and cypresses; and a gloom, as of midnight, even when the sun was highest, and a damp chilly air, even when summer was fairest and warmest. He found that into that dismal valley the country poured its thousand inhabitants, never, never to return. With much labour and difficulty he penetrated its sullen gloom, and discovered, that it terminated in a frightful precipice, down which the thoughtless crowd which but one day before he had seen rioting in careless enjoyment, were hurried in headlong haste. He looked over that precipice, and below he saw a burning lake, that extended farther than his sight might reach; and from all that wide lake there arose day and night, without ceasing, the piteous groans and the moving lamentations of those that were tormented in its flames.

"It pained the good man at his heart to see the writhings and tossing of hopeless wretchedness in that scorching unquenchable lake; and to hear the ceaseless moanings that arose from its fiery waters. So he stood by the entrance of the valley beside its groves of spices and its goodly garden trees, and cried aloud to those that would enter in, warning them of the burning precipice and the lake of fire below.

"Would ye know more of that fair land, and its passing inhabitants, and its dark valley? Look around ye, fellow christians! Ye see it here. This world is the country whose fields are fair to the eye, and its joys pleasant to the senses. Ye are its inhabitants; and the short day that ye spend in singing and making merry, that is your earthly life. The valley of cypresses and gloom is the valley of the shadow of death, and the fiery precipice beyond opens into the great eternal hell. I—I am that man that stands at the entrance of the valley, crying aloud to you to turn back while there is yet time, that ye may save your undying souls.

"I cry to ye, as a father to his children, as a brother to his brethren. I tell ye, that valley is before you. Ye will die; ye know ye will. Ye will sleep the cold, dull sleep;—and where will your waking be? Your bodies will perish; where will your souls exist?

"Poor, thoughtless, misguided mortals! Ye take thought for this life. Ye care for your bodies. For them ye labour; for them ye spend your time and your talents; for them—that shall return to-morrow to the dust whence they were formed. And ye take no thought, nor care, for your precious, imperishable souls.

"Can ye imagine a being whose life should be extended one million times beyond the term of your earthly existence? Can ye imagine such a being giving all his thoughts and time and substance to increase the enjoyment of one little, short moment of his enduring life, a moment so brief that our senses should scarcely note its duration; and wilfully casting from him, for the sake of that brief moment's enjoyment, the perfect happiness of a million of centuries? Can ye imagine a being so utterly childish, so blind, so mad as this?

"Yet such beings ye are. The smallest, shortest moment that your senses can distinguish, when compared to a million of centuries, is a thousand times longer than this life compared to eternity. Yet for that single, passing moment, ye live, ye care, ye labour; and ye are content to be tormented through the million of centuries. Are you not childish, and blind, and mad?

"Ye will tell me that ye hope to escape from hell; and after having cherished your bodies here, to save your souls hereafter. Ye would first enjoy earth, and then win heaven. Ye give Mammon six days, and ye think to propitiate God by giving him the seventh. But be not deceived; no man can serve two masters; so neither can ye serve God and Mammon.

"Between God and Mammon, therefore, ye have to choose. Say I ye *have to choose*? nay, rather, ye *have chosen*. And woe, woe for your choice! When the day of repentance is passed, and the torments of eternity are upon ye, then shall ye know and feel the choice ye have made!

"Think ye that I speak harshly and unadvisedly, and that I condemn ye without a reason? I would to God it were so. I would to God that I could look among ye, and find one righteous man—one that prefers God to Mammon, one that labours for heaven, one that thinks and speaks for eternity. But I look in vain.

"Ye will remind me, perhaps, that ye frequent this holy place on the first day of the week; that ye pray, it may be, once a day; that ye succour the poor and the naked; that ye reverence the church's creed, and give the tenth of your substance to support her ministers. And these are your claims to the favour of the Most High? these are your titles to a place in his Paradise? Ye fools and blind! which of you, if he love even a sinful fellow-creature, will be satisfied to receive a tithe of his heart in return? Is your earthly time so valuable that ye cannot give but a seventh to your Maker? Are your worldly goods so precious that ye cannot devote but one-tenth to him who gave ye all things? Trifle not thus with holy things, ye frail worms of the dust! Give your time, your talents, your substance, your exertions—give your all to God: in his sacred cause labour night and day; for him sacrifice your ease, your comfort, your temporal happiness—your worthless, mortal life. And know, that when ye have done all, ye are but wicked and unprofitable servants still; still burdened with a debt that ye can never liquidate.

"But insult not the Most High with a pittance of your time and your thoughts and your money. Shall Mammon be served first, and would ye have the Almighty content to accept what Mammon chooses to leave him? Ye fools and ungrateful! In whom do ye live and move and have your being? From whom do ye draw health and wealth and happiness? Who gave you this fair world, and endowed you with faculties to perceive and with senses to enjoy it? Was it not the God of your fathers? And him, just Heavens!—him ye would postpone to the sordid interests of your grovelling passions! Ye would seek meat and drink and raiment, the lust of the eye and the pride of life—all before your Gracious Benefactor! For these you would employ your six days—for these you would spend nine-tenths of your substance; and ye imagine that the rest will suffice to purchase heaven!

"And do ye not so employ the six days, and do ye not so spend nine-tenths of your substance? Answer to your own hearts, and let your hearts record the answer. Say what are your thoughts when ye rise up, and what your hopes when you lie down. Say what are your daily occupations, what the themes of your conversations, and what the chief objects of your desires. And if truth dictate the answer, will ye not confess that for one hour consecrated to God, and for one talent

devoted to his service, there are ten hours and ten talents devoted to this world and its vanities?

"While careless youth and buoyant health are yours, ye may evade the question, or reply to it falsely. But a day of reflection will come—aye, and a day of retribution. When age and sickness press upon ye, when ye hear a still, small voice, calling ye to your long home, ye will pause—alas! too late. Your conscience will tell you, that ye lived for this life, and scarcely cared for the next. It will tell you, that every moment of your lives, every thought of your hearts, every emotion of your souls, every portion of your property, every exertion of your faculties, every effort of your industry, OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN GOD'S; and it will tell you that they WERE NOT GOD'S.

"If *six days* only of every week were consecrated to religion, and *nine-tenths* only of your substance devoted to her service, while the seventh day and the tenth of your worldly goods were spent in earthly pursuits, well might the Deity complain that he was robbed by the creatures of his hand of a portion of that which belongs exclusively to him; and well might ye be taxed, like Ananias and Sapphira, with iniquitously keeping back a part of God's heritage; and well might ye be reminded, even then, that ye gave to the care of the body that which ought to have been given to the care of the soul alone. But how shall I find words to paint the sordid impiety that fills this vain earth, *day after day*, with worldly thoughts, and worldly cares, and worldly hopes, and worldly enjoyments? Ye punish with disgrace and death the man who robs a fellow-creature of his miserable substance: how shall those sacrilegious robbers be treated who steal from the Deity, day by day, and year by year, the time and the property that is his? Ye treat with indignant scorn the wretch that should be entrusted by a mortal benefactor with worthless, worldly riches, and should basely betray the trust: in what terms will ye curse him whose impious ingratitude betrays the trust of our Immortal Benefactor, and appropriates to secular purposes the talents that were lent to him that he might win a place among the happy in Paradise?

"But ye need not punish, ye need not curse the wretch. Punishment and curse are already meted out to him. Already is the eternal flame kindled; already does the pit yawn for its victims! And soon shall those victims feel what it is to be tormented of God!

"Have ye ever thought, poor, sinful worms—have ye ever thought what it was to feel the Almighty's vengeance?—to feel the fiery worm gnawing at your maddening hearts—to feel the burning pulse throbbing through your glowing veins—to pray with phrenzied impatience for death, yet not to find it—to long, with a lover's longing, for annihilation, yet not to obtain it—to cry through millions of centuries for one moment's respite from

your racking pains, and to know assuredly that millions and millions of such periods shall approach, and arrive, and pass away, yet never bring that one mitigating moment—to feel that a hope of relief so distant that your reason refuses to comprehend the intervening period, to feel that even such faint hope would afford you extatic bliss, and then to know that you can never, never hope again?

“Soon shall ye feel and know what it is. The great gulf is before you! The precipice opens at your feet! I see it! I feel its hot breath! Great God!”—

Excess of emotion stopped the preacher's utterance. He covered his face with his hands, and sunk back in the pulpit. A cold shudder passed over his audience. The men gazed round them in vacant terror; the women sobbed aloud. Susan, who, in the excitement which the stranger's oratory produced, had involuntarily stood up, that she might not lose a syllable which fell from his lips, now sunk back; and, scarcely conscious of what she did, clung imploringly to her scarcely less terrified partner. At last, with an almost convulsive effort, she whispered to him, “Oh! take me home!” “I cannot,” ejaculated Darby, “I cannot. See! he is going to speak again!”

The wild piercing tones of the orator's voice sank to an expression of softness and compassion, as, after an interval, he proceeded.

“Poor, perishing, lost sinners! My heart yearns towards ye. My spirit mourns for your fate. I see ye hurried onward, as a lamb to the slaughter, unconscious what ye are, unconscious whither ye go. I see ye stand on the very brink of your eternal destiny. A breath, a touch—and your earthly footing will crumble from beneath you, and ye will sink down, despairing, to unearthly, unending torments. I see ye careless, cheerful, smiling; and oh! too well I know the change that shall come over that careless cheerfulness, and turn these thoughtless smiles to sighs of agony. It breaks my rest, that harrowing thought; it clouds my brow; it wounds my heart. Shall I sit down in peace, and think that when the angelic messengers bear my spirit to the realms above, I shall look across the great gulf and witness your tortures? It may not be; in heaven I may lose the sympathy that binds me to beings of nature like to my own; but on earth I can never cease to feel, to mourn, to warn, to pity them.

“Ye might yet escape. Weak, sinful as ye are, ye might yet, perchance, save your imperishable souls. Ere ye reach your long homes, ye might yet turn aside. But alas for ye! woe for your earthly passions! woe, yet more, for your lukewarmness and your inconsistency! How strait is the gate, how narrow the way, how hard is it to enter the kingdom of heaven! And oh! how vain the attempt to call worldly spirits

off from worldly pursuits, and fix mortal thoughts on the concerns of immortality!

"Nor may ye halt between two opinions. Expect not that earth and heaven can both be yours. Choose between them; and stand to your choice. Well did the Son of God know your hesitating frailty, ye children of this world! carefully did he reprove, and pointedly did he denounce it. Hear his own words, as recorded by the evangelist Matthew.

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

"Is not this plain language? Does it not tell ye, that if ye will be God's children, ye must labour in his service alone, not one day in seven, not one hour in each day, but through all the hours of every day of your lives? And lest ye imagine that worldly cares are still permitted ye, Jesus proceeds yet more explicitly:

"Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?"

"Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"

"Alas for ye! How does every action of your lives, and every thought and care of your hearts offend against your heavenly teacher! Do ye not daily, hourly, take thought for your life? Are ye not cumbered and troubled about many things, thinking what ye shall eat, what ye shall drink, and what ye shall put on? And is not this expressly, positively forbidden by Jesus Christ himself? Eternal perdition on your busy selfishness, that blinds your eyes to the law of the Most High, and closes your ears to the gracious words of our merciful Saviour! But read farther; listen while he repeats the heavenly precept, which ye are so dull to hear and so slow to obey:

"Why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; yet I say unto you, that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe ye, oh ye of little faith?"

"Therefore, take no thought, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed? (for after all these things do the Gentiles seek.) But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

"There are those who exhort you to carnal industry, and who bid ye labour that ye may eat. Ask yourselves if these be God's commands? Hath not Christ said, 'Labour ~~not~~ for the meat that perisheth?' Hath he not promised, that 'God will clothe ye?' And will ye, oh ye of little faith, will ye persist in labouring to feed, and to clothe yourselves? Will ye sell heaven for a mess of pottage, or a garment to cover ye? Infatuated and blind! Is God a man that he should lie? or are his commands but empty words, that ye should despise and neglect them?"

"Your life and your death are before ye. Yet again I bid ye choose between God and Mammon. Will ye leave all and follow God? will ye forsake earthly cares, and abstain from worldly labours? will ye cease to lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust corrupt, and thieves break through to steal? will ye think and labour for the one thing needful alone, commencing your spiritual journey without scrip or staff, and casting your care on him who careth for you? will ye trust to him who clothes the lilies of the valley, and feeds the sparrows of the air, to clothe and to feed you? and will ye, in return, devote your souls to his worship, and your bodies to his service? Will ye thus win yourselves a place in God's holy favour, and a seat in his glorious Paradise? Hold to God, then, and despise Mammon. Live a spiritual life, and touch not the unholy thing.

"Or, will ye cast contempt on the divine law by keeping his own from the Lord?—by spending your time in temporal labour, and your money in temporal comforts—by caring for your bodies when ye ought to care for your souls alone; and thus making him a liar who has promised to provide for ye, if ye will but seek his kingdom? Then take your portion! Drink the cup ye are raising to your lips! Bitter—bitter and poisonous are the dregs; but to the last drop ye shall drain them! And the hot fire which their poison kindles in your veins shall burn on, unquenched, unquenchable, from henceforth and for ever!"

The preacher's lips refused to utter the horrible "Amen!"

It is a grievous thing to behold the blighting traces of ignorance, and to witness the ravages of superstition. Had you known Darby and his thrifty partner, in their days of worldly-mindedness and temporal prosperity, it would have pained your heart to revisit them after a few short years, in that quiet cottage of theirs. It stands there still, by the village green; and the gay honeysuckle still clings to its humble walls. But alas! the spirit of its inmates is gone. Susan—the gay, light-hearted, bright-eyed Susan, the merry songstress, the notable housewife, the laughing villager—alas! for that Thursday evening—it dimmed her eye, it checked her laugh, it crushed her light-hearted

ness, and poisoned her industry. Gentle and uncomplaining she still is; a stranger to sectarian intolerance and spiritual pride: not superstition itself could teach her these. But the heart that cannot be irritated, may be crushed—may be brought to shudder at itself; to read depravity in its most innocent thoughts, and wickedness in its gentlest impulses.

Alas! alas! for that Thursday evening! Its lessons sunk into Susan's heart, and recurred, at every moment, to her excited imagination. She sought to hide their effects from Darby's hardier and less susceptible nature; but they betrayed themselves with all her care. She strove to forget them in the bustle of occupation; but they recurred in spite of herself. The heart-searching tones of that wild and warning voice, as it repeated the command, "Labour not for the meat that perisheth!" still rung in her ears; and she started, as in conscious guiltiness, even from the performance of her daily task. Once—and once only, she ventured, on a winter evening, to sound a few notes of her favourite ballad. But the spirit of song had departed; the notes seemed to return, in guilty echo, from the cottage walls; and poor Susan turned her eyes from Darby's sorrowful gaze, to hide the tears that filled them.

Her thoughts by day—her dreams by night, were of the unquenchable fire, the undying worm, the dark valley of cypresses, and the yawning lake beyond. Unheard was the hum of her wheel; uncared for her favourite bees; unswept her cottage hearth; and neglected her little garden.—But it matters not to enumerate details; it matters not minutely to relate how that spiritual tempest made shipwreck of all her peace and usefulness on earth. Enough, that both are gone, and for ever

THE END.

A SERMON ON LOYALTY;

A REMONSTRANCE TO GOD;

AND

A SERMON ON FREE INQUIRY.

BY R. D. OWEN.

OBSERVATIONS

ON PUBLIC WORSHIP.

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. I request of those who may peruse my sermons, that they will seriously ask of themselves, whether all the sentiments advanced, be not strictly in accordance with the text; and then (in case these should appear to be subversive alike of political independence and of moral freedom) to reflect, what a dangerous thing it is to maintain the divine authority of a book which can furnish texts like these to despots.

R. D. O.

SERMON ON LOYALTY.

BUT for her utility as an engine of state polity, Christianity would not now rule the land. But that she furnishes a tool to the hands of power, she had ere this followed the fate of her more classic predecessors, the mythologies of Greece and Rome. But that it was found convenient to rule the ignorant mind through its superstitious fears, those fears had long since been dispelled.

Injustice is not easily supported. The strong may gain despotic power for a time; but the crafty only can maintain and strengthen it. No monarchy nor aristocracy can long subsist by open force, but only by specious deception. The few cannot tread on the necks of the many, unless they first blind their eyes.

And never was a bandage found that blindfolds so effectually or so conveniently as the bandage of religion. Through its thick mysterious folds scarce a ray of reason's light can penetrate; and thus the political juggler can play off his legerdemain tricks, without fear of challenge or detection.

This is the secret of religion's success. She supports the throne, and the throne supports her. Run your eye over the pages of history, and say if church and state have not been inseparable allies. Say if the sword has not planted the cross, only that the cross might sanctify the sword. Look to England, look to France, look over the civilized world. Are not religion's ministers at the beck of the powers that be? If the first command be "Fear God!" is not the second "Honour the King!" Call to mind the French revolution. What gave the death-blow to despotic power and aristocratic sway in that great struggle for reason and freedom? Was it not the fall of the benedict priest, and the loss of his influence? And who re-established that influence? Was it not the autocrat Napoleon?

Well does religion suit with tyranny! and well have all tyrants known the fact! Well have they known to profit by its hopes, by its fears, by its dazzling solemnities, by its imposing mysteries! Well have they known to dictate its precepts and interpret its lessons! Crafty and politic was he who first called down a voice from heaven to establish injustice on earth. Worldly-wise was the despot who, that he might put the judgment to sleep, aroused the imagination, and spoke to

her of worlds beyond the grave. Then was a spring touched, whose lever-power has bent down the human mind to the standard of loyal submission. Then was a secret learnt, whose mysteries are not yet brought forth to open day.

Shall I be told that all this is but the abuse of religion? and that the holy science, like many other precious things, has been but perverted to selfish ends, while in itself it is blameless and pure?

I know not. I can but judge things by their effects, and books by the words they contain. For the things—I see their effects all over Christendom; I see a Holy Alliance, clothed in the robe of orthodoxy, and lording it over the rights and reason of man. For the words—they are neither weak nor of doubtful import. The scriptural penman, when he writes of doctrines and mysteries, often writes in parables, that we may hear, yet not understand; but when submission to kings and governors is his theme, his words are plain as truth itself. There is nothing left to conjecture, no eastern metaphor to solve, nor dark saying to unriddle. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." Ignorance itself cannot misinterpret the command.

I never attempted to write a sermon. Yet, methinks were I a tyrant, or a tyrant's pander, or a tyrant's priest, it were no hard task, from such a text, to preach submission and obedience. Let us see how it would read.

SERMON.

TEXT.—Romans xiii. 1, 2. *Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.*

I beg for a moment to call your attention, my christian friends, to the book from which I have now read to you. It is the Bible; it is the Word of God;—of that God who cannot lie, who cannot err; whose words are a light to our wandering feet, and a lamp to our devious paths. It is our rule of life; and from its holy commands there is appeal neither in Heaven above, nor on the Earth beneath. The sainted spirits of our revered forefathers hear the blessed voice, and fall prostrate in adoration before the almighty presence; the angels on their heavenly thrones hear the blessed voice, and bow their heads in humble submission. All—all obey, and adore. And can ye, worms of the dust! can ye do less than this? Prostrate your human will, prostrate your human reason before his throne

at whose nod the heavens tremble. Approach the Almighty with bended knee and heart, and say: "Not my will, Lord, but thine be done!"

Is there among the assembled crowd before me, a reprobate so hardened that he feels not God's authority, or doubts his holy Book? Is there a wretch so impious that the words of mercy fall on his ear unheeded or contemned? I ask ye yet again, lives there among ye such an one? Mark him well. Let him receive special attention. His is the portion in that lake, whence the voice of torment ascendeth up for ever and ever to the throne of offended Justice. He shall depart into eternal fire, forgotten of man, unpitied of God, the damned child of everlasting perdition! Woe, woe to the wretch! Better it were for him that he had never been born! Better that a mill-stone had been hanged about his neck, and he had been cast into the raging sea!

But such are not ye, my christian hearers! Ye will be submissive, ye will be obedient, ye will hearken to the commands of him who, after he has killed the body, hath power to cast the soul into hell fire. I know ye will. I see it in your mien of meek devotion; I see it in your looks of holy reverence; I see it in your attitude of pious attention. Ye will come to your God, to your Saviour. Ye will listen when the Lord of the Universe speaks; and ye will obey when he commands your obedience.

Here, then, on this consecrated spot, on this hallowed day, at this holy hour, the Creator speaks to the creatures of his hand. He speaks to them in the words of a man. He points to that conduct in this world that shall make ye his for ever in the next. He opens the gates of Paradise and bids ye enter—so ye will only, for a few short years, walk in the earthly paths he has selected for ye. He says to his chosen people: "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers." Here then is your duty; submission to those whom God has placed above you. Would ye evince your fear to God? honour the King. Would ye please your Father which is in Heaven? obey his Vicegerent upon Earth.

And how light is the duty! how easily construed the command! Ye have not carefully to examine the orders that are given to you, nor cautiously to weigh their consequences, nor presumptuously to question their propriety, nor laboriously to calculate their effects. "Submit yourselves," as it is elsewhere said, "to every ordinance of man, for the Lord's sake." Exclaim not! question not! judge not! hesitate not! Hath not the Lord said it? And who art thou, oh man! that repliest against God?

See here the considerate goodness of our gracious Creator! He requires of no one that which it is beyond his power to

give All men are not born with correct judgments to decide right from wrong, or justice from injustice; and accordingly, we are not called upon to exercise our human judgments, to examine, to weigh, or to decide. But all are born with ears to hear so that, hearing, all can obey; and it is obedience only we are commanded to give. All have not received the ten talents—the knowledge of good and evil: but the one talent of obedience has been committed to every one of you. See that ye employ it for the purpose for which it was given; that when the King of Heaven cometh, he may receive his own with usury.

I beg of you to observe the simplicity and explicit nature of the command: "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." Ye are not presumptuously to judge for yourselves whom ye will have to rule over you. Ye are not to obey when it seems right to you; and to withhold obedience when that ye find your duty grievous and heavy to be borne. Take heed that ye fall not into the snare of the tempter; that ye ask not, "Who hath made thee a judge and a ruler over us?" Behold, "There is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." Be not led away, then, by the voice of the impious, crying "Reform! reform!" These are the children of the Devil; and even as their father prompteth them, so they speak.

There are those who will beguile you with fair words, who will speak to you of liberty and equality, and of resistance against injustice, and of casting down tyranny and oppression. These are they who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. They would have you rebel and resist. Harken, then, to your doom: "Whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist SHALL RECEIVE TO THEMSELVES DAMNATION."

But ye imagine, perhaps, that ye are unjustly dealt by, that ye are oppressed, that ye are made hewers of wood and drawers of water, that ye are loaded with burdens grievous and heavy to be borne, and that your rulers will not touch the burdens with one of their fingers. Suppose, for a moment, that your complaints were just, and your imaginations well-founded. Shall ye, therefore, resist? On your own heads, then, be your blood! ye who have fought against God, and against his anointed. Grasp to your weapons! gird on your armour! take your sword and your bow, and mount your chariot, and rush forward to the impious warfare! But know, that he who slew in one night eighty thousand men, who took off the Egyptian chariot-wheels, and troubled Pharaoh's host, and whelmed his mighty men in the sea—will not go with thee. God is not a man that he should lie, nor the son of man that he should repent. "They

that resist shall receive to themselves damnation" Hath he said it, and will he not perform? Hath he commanded, and will he not stand fast? Give up your fortunes, give your liberties, give your lives in obedience to the powers that be; but resist not, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

Ye have heard that the nation of the Americans rebelled against the King whom God had ordained over them; and that certain men of Belial, Washington, Jefferson, Franklin, and others with them, took counsel together, saying, "Who is this King that we should hearken to his voice? we will not have this man to reign over us." And ye have heard, that, in the day of battle, the wicked prevailed, and the anointed of the Lord was discomfited before his enemies. And now ye know, that their pride is waxed high, and their spirits are haughty within them. But be not ye like unto them. Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall. That ungodly nation—even the Americans—resisted the power; they resisted the ordinance of God; they shall receive to themselves damnation. Think not, that because the Lord's vengeance sleepeth, it shall never wake. Great was his long suffering towards Sodom and Gomorrah; but the swift vengeance of the divine Judge overtook them at last.

Even so shall it be with the Americans. God will bring them into judgment for every disloyal word they have said, and for every rebel blow they have dealt, against his ordained ruler. When Washington, and Jefferson, and Franklin, and the others with them, shall stand before the throne of judgment, then shall a voice from thence proclaim: "I spake to you, and ye would not listen; I commanded, and ye would not obey: depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire!" Then shall they begin to say: "Lord, when didst thou speak, and we did not listen? and when didst thou command, and we did not obey?" But he will answer and say unto them: "Forasmuch as ye did it not unto him whom I had ordained to rule over you, ye did it not unto me."

But enough of the rebellious offenders. I would rather speak to ye of Heaven, and of its joys. I would rather remind ye of the inheritance incorruptible, undefiled; of the living streams of unfading bliss that flow through the eternal city; of the pleasures that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived; of the glorious light without any shade, and the ever-enduring bliss without the fear of change; of the golden harps attuned before the throne of God, and of the heavenly voices swelling to his praise. I would remind ye of the dear friends ye have loved and lost. There shall ye meet them again, to part no more for ever. Have ye given to the cold arms of Death, an affectionate parent, a tender child, a companion dearer than your own soul? There shall their loved

images again appear to your longing eyes; there shall their familiar voices again speak music to your ears. There shall ye find them, unstained by mortality, clothed in heavenly beauty, bright with heavenly happiness; no tear to dim the eye, nor any sigh to swell the bosom. There shall ye live together, breathing the pure air of immortality, unchanged, unchangeable!

Ye feel the scene I have feebly painted. I see it in your moistened eyes; I see it in your looks of holy desire. Ye would gain Heaven! Gain it then by obedience, by meek submission. If any man take your coat, let him also have your cloak. To him that smiteth ye on the one cheek, turn the other also. Suffer, for his sake who suffered—and oh! how cruelly—for you. Resist not evil. Ye would be the children of the Prince of Peace! Then is your kingdom not of this world, and ye shall not fight. Faint not by the way! Take God's yoke upon ye and find it easy, and his burden and find it light. Even in secret, when none but the all-seeing eye is upon ye, obey your Ruler; not with eye-service as men pleasers, but with the service of the heart, as fearing God. If a disloyal word or a rebellious thought rise to your lips, give it not utterance, cast it from ye. Obey, and escape damnation. Obey, and please your merciful Creator. Obey, and honour his Sacred word. Obey, and more than all ye have asked, and all ye have prayed for, and all ye have imagined, shall ye receive at the great day of judgment and retribution!

REMONSTRANCE TO GOD.

BY ANTOINE VIEIRA.

Soon after the revolt of the Netherlands from the cruel and tyrannical Philip II., when the northern provinces, after a desperate struggle, had at last secured their independence, the new republic began to form extensive projects not only for its own defence, but likewise to attack its formidable enemy in his rich foreign possessions. A Dutch "West India Company" was formed in 1621; and these warlike merchants contemplated no less an enterprise than the subjugation of Brazil.

A long struggle ensued, in which, though the Spaniards were partially successful on hand, the Dutch made up for all their

losses at sea. The treasures which it had cost the liberties and lives of happy and independent nations to accumulate, were intercepted and lost to their avaricious possessors, by an injustice similar to that by which they had been at first obtained. The robber was robbed in his turn. The Dutch company captured, in the course of thirteen years, five hundred and forty-five Spanish and Portuguese vessels, valued, with their cargoes, at one hundred and eighty millions of livres; and the spoils of the New World swelled the markets of Amsterdam.

In the year 1630, the Dutch admiral, Henry Lonk, arrived with forty-six vessels of war, on the coast of Pernambuco, one of the largest and most strongly fortified Brazilian provinces. After several years of bloodshed, the best cultivated and richest part of Brazil submitted to the Dutch arms. In 1637, Maurice of Nassau was sent to complete the conquest of that immense country; and, in despite of the veteran generals which Spain opposed to him, he soon rendered himself master of the whole coast, from St. Salvador to the river Amazon.

His must be a phlegmatic nature who can read with a cold pulse and a quiet heart the history of those savage times. But most does the narrative stir the blood, when rapine and avarice take the form of sanctity, and when man despoils and murders his unsuspecting, unoffending fellow-creatures, in the name of a merciful God. Then it is we see what purposes religion can subserve: then—when we read of *Te Deums* chanted over the bodies of innocent, murdered aborigines, and days of Thanksgiving instituted to praise the Deity that he had graciously permitted crimes, which the historian shrinks from recording.

I have given our readers the above brief historical sketch as an introduction to a sermon, which well illustrates such reflections as the foregoing. It was preached in one of the churches of Bahia, a Brazilian province, of which St. Salvador is the capital, by a Jesuit, named Antoine Vieira, about the time of the Dutch successes under Maurice of Nassau. It is translated from the French of Raynal, as given by him in his "*Histoire Philosophique et Politique des Etablissements et du Commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes*," tome 4, p. 261, et sequ.

SERMON.

TEXT.—From the Psalms. *Awake! why sleepest thou, O Lord? Why hast thou turned thy face from us? Why hast thou forgotten our misery and our tribulations? Awake! come to our aid; and save us, for the glory of thy name.*

"It was in these words, filled with pious boldness and holy audacity—it was thus," said the orator, "in protestations rather than in prayers, that the prophet-king spoke to God. The

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time and circumstances are now the same ; and I, too, will dare to say : 'Awake ! why sleepest thou ?'

"It is not to men that I would preach to-day. My voice and my words shall rise higher. I would penetrate even to the bosom of the Deity. This, the last day of our festival, has been dedicated to prayers before the holy altars, in every church of our metropolis ; and since it is the last day, it is meet that we have recourse to the last and only remedy. Our holy orators have laboured in vain to bring you to repentance. Since, then, you are deaf, since you will not be converted, it is thee, Lord, whom I will convert ; and though we be the sinners, it is thou who shalt repent.

"When the children of Israel in the desert forsook thee, to worship the golden calf, and when thou revealedst their sin to Moses, thou didst add, in thy wrath, that thou wouldst consume thy people for their ingratitude. Then Moses said to thee : 'Why is thy wrath waxed hot against thy people ? Before thou proceedest to extremities, consider what it is well thou shouldst do. Wouldst thou have the Egyptian accuse thee of having brought us out of slavery only to slay us in the mountains ? Think of the glory of thy name.'

"Such was the logic of Moses, and such shall be mine. Thou didst then repent thee of the evil thou thoughtest to do. Thou art still the same. My reasons are more cogent than those of the Hebrew legislator. They will have the same effect upon thee ; and, if thou hast formed the design of ruining us, thou wilt repent thee of it. Dost thou not know, that the heretic, inflated by the success which thou hast granted him, already begins to say, that it is to the falsehood of our worship he owes thy protection and his victories ? And what wouldst thou have the Gentiles who surround us think of it ? the Talapoin who knows thee not, the inconstant Indian, the ignorant and stupid Egyptian, scarcely yet sprinkled with the baptismal water ? Those people have not penetration that they might appreciate and adore the depths of thy judgments. Awake, then ! and, if thou takest thought for thy glory, suffer not that our enemies find in our defeat an argument against our faith. Awake ! and let the tempests which have dissipated our fleets now dissipate those of our common enemy ; let the plagues and the other distempers that have melted away our armies now melt away theirs ; and, since the counsels of man come to naught when thou wilt, fill their counsels with darkness and confusion.

"Joshua was more holy and more patient than we. Yet his language was not other than mine, and the circumstances were much less important. He traversed the Jordan ; he attacked the city of Ai, and his troops were dispersed. Yet, though his loss was but inconsiderable, we see him rending his

clothes, and casting himself on the earth, and bursting forth into bitter lamentations, saying, 'Wherefore hast thou brought us over Jordan. Say, Lord, was it to deliver us to the Amorites?' And I, when the fate of an immense people and a vast country is at stake, shall not I cry out? Hast thou given to us these countries only that thou mightest again deprive us of them? If thou hast destined them to the Dutch, why didst thou not call the Dutch, while they were yet uncultivated? Have the heretics rendered thee such services, or are we so vile in thine eyes, that thou hast dragged us from our country only to prepare the way before them, to build cities for them, and to enrich them by our labours? And this is all the reward thou wilt give us for so many men slaughtered on land or lost on the waters! Thus will it be, if thou hast thus determined it. But I warn thee, that those whom thou rejectest and forsakest to-day, to-morrow thou shalt seek them, but shalt not find them.

"Job, when overwhelmed with misfortunes, contested the point with thee. Thou wouldst not, surely, have us to be more insensible than he. He said to thee: 'Since thou hast decided my fate, execute thy sentence; kill me, consume me, that I may be buried and return to the dust; I consent to it; but to-morrow thou wilt seek me, and I shall not be found. Thou wilt have Sabeans and Chaldeans and blasphemers of thy name; but Job, thy faithful servant, who adored thee, him thou wilt have no more.'

"Well, Lord, I say to thee with Job: 'Confound, destroy, consume us all.' But a day shall come, when thou shalt seek the Portuguese, and shalt seek them in vain. Will Holland, thinkest thou, furnish to thee conquering apostles, who, at the peril of their lives, will carry over the earth the standard of the cross? Will Holland form a seminary of apostolic preachers who will water barbarous countries with their blood, for the interests of thy faith? Will Holland raise temples to please thee, construct altars upon which thou wilt descend, consecrate true ministers to thee, offer grand sacrifices to thee—in a word, will she worship thee as thou wouldst be worshipped? Yes! yes! she will render worship to thee! such worship as she now renders at Amsterdam, at Middleburgh, at Flessingen, and in the other cantons of that cold and humid hell!

"I well know, O Lord, that the propagation of thy faith, and the interests of thy glory, depend not upon us; and that even if our race were extinct, thy power could animate stones, and thence raise up children unto Abraham. But I know also, that since the days of Adam, thou hast never created a new race of men; that thou hast always employed those which exist; and that thou never admittest to thy counsels the less good except in default of better. Witness the parable of the marriage feast: 'Bring in the blind and the lame.' Behold

the ways of thy providence. Wilt thou change them now? We have been the guests; we have never refused to attend the supper; and wilt thou prefer to us the blind, the lame, the Lutheran, the Calvinist, blind in their faith, lame in their works?

"If we are to be so unfortunate that the Dutch shall render themselves masters of Brazil, I would represent to thee with humility, but very seriously, that it were wise to look well to the determination before it is carried into execution. Weigh scrupulously all that may result to thee from it. Consult thee on the matter, while there is yet time. If thou hast to repent, it is better thou repent now, than when the evil is without remedy. Thou seest whereat I am, and thou knowest that in thy own conduct I have found reasons to justify my present remonstrance. Before the deluge thou wast greatly enraged against the whole human race. 'Twas in vain that Noah prayed to thee, year after year. Thou didst persist in thy anger. The cataracts of heaven were opened at last. The waters rose, even above the summits of the mountains. The whole earth was inundated, and thy justice was satisfied. But three days afterwards, when the dead bodies swam on the surface, when thine eyes rested on a multitude of livid corpses, when the ocean's expanse exhibited the saddest, the most horrible spectacle that ever met an angel's sorrowing regards, what were then thy thoughts? Struck with such a picture, as if thou hadst not foreseen it, thy bowels were moved to compassion. Thou didst repent thee of having made the world. Thou didst regret the past. Thou didst form resolutions for the future. Thus we see what thou art; and, since such is thy character, why not consult thy own benefit by sparing us? Why act the destroyer, if thy heart is afterwards to murmur at thy own severity, and if the very execution of thy sentence is to afflict thy goodness? Think well of it ere thou commencest; and consider the consequences of the new deluge thou hast projected. I will paint them to thee.

"Bahia and the rest of Brazil are, I shall suppose, become the prey of the Dutch. Look at them. They enter the city with all the fury of conquerors, with all the rage of heretics. See them spare neither age nor sex. See the blood that flows. See the guilty, the innocent—see women and children put to the sword, and heaped murdered on one another. See the tears of virgins bewailing the injury they have suffered. See the hoary head of age dragged along in the dust. Hear the cries of the pious and of thy priests who cling round thy altars, and then raise their arms to thee for aid. Thyself, O Lord! even thou wilt not escape their violence. Yes, even thou wilt have thy share. The heretic will force the gates of thy temples. The sacred host, thine own body, will be trampled under foot.

The vases, once filled with thy blood, will serve them in their revelries. Thy altars will be overthrown; thine images broken in pieces. Even on thy holy mother will sacrilegious hands be laid.

"That such affronts should be offered thee, and that thou should suffer them, that does not surprise me, since thou hast already suffered more bitter ones than these: but thy mother! where is thy filial piety? What! thou tookest the life of Uzzah only because he touched the ark; and the hand which Jeroboam raised against a prophet, thou didst wither it; and wilt thou leave to the heretic thousands of arms for crimes infinitely more atrocious? Thou didst dethrone and kill Belshazzar because he drank out of vases which had not been consecrated with thy blood; yet thou sparest the heretic; and there are not found two fingers and a thumb to trace his death-warrant!

"But at the last, O Lord, when thy temples shall have been despoiled, thy altars destroyed, thy religion extinguished throughout Brazil, and thy worship broken off; when grass shall grow in the courts of thy churches, Christmas shall arrive, and there shall be no one who will call to mind that it is the day of thy birth. Lent, the holy week, shall come, but shall find no one celebrating the mysteries of thy passion. The stones of our streets shall groan as they groaned in the solitary streets of Jerusalem. There shall be no more priests, no more sacrifices, no more sacraments. Heresy shall usurp the seat of truth. False doctrine shall infect the descendants of the Portuguese. A day shall come when the children of those that now surround me, shall be asked, 'Little boys, of what religion are you?' and they shall answer, 'We are Calvinists.' 'And you, little girls?' and they shall say, 'We are Lutherans.' Then wilt thou be moved to compassion and to repentance: but, since regrets await thee at last, why not foresee and avoid them?

"And now tell me, what glory dost thou expect from destroying one nation and causing it to be supplanted by another? It is but the same power which thou once confidest to a poor inhabitant of Anatho. In punishing us thou conquerest weak mortals; in pardoning us thou conquerest thyself. Be merciful, then, for thine own glory, for the honour of thy name. Let not thine anger last for ever; let it not last even for one day. Thou wouldst not have the sun go down upon our wrath; and how many times has he risen, and how many times gone down, upon thine! Wouldst thou exact of us a moderation to which thou thyself hast not attained? Canst thou but give the precept, and not the example?

'Pardon, then, Lord! Cause our misfortunes to cease. Holy Virgin, intercede for us! Supplicate thy son, command him! If he be exasperated for our offences, tell him to forgive them, even

as we are commanded by his law to forgive those that offend against us."

Such is Vieira's sermon, literally translated; as those who may take the trouble to refer to M. Raynal's work will perceive. It is a very uncommon sermon, certainly: but I do not think it is an unscriptural one; and I doubt not but that its effect on the orator's audience was very powerful; and perhaps even its political influence considerable.

Be this as it may, certain it is, that from about the time when this strange discourse was delivered, the affairs of the Portuguese in Brazil began to assume a more favourable aspect. A Portuguese leader, Jean Fernandez de Viera, of obscure origin, defeated the Dutch in several important engagements; and, finally, about fifteen years afterwards, the last of these republicans who yet remained in the country escaped from the horrors of fire and famine only by a capitulation, according to which Brazil was evacuated on the 28th January, 1654.

Raynal, after giving a history of the struggle by which Brazil was thus lost to Holland, has the following very just reflections: "How the spirits are changed in our day! All events now are, and appear to us, only the natural consequences of some adequate cause, political, moral, or physical; and, in our eyes, the orator Vieira is but an eloquent enthusiast. But let us transport ourselves back to the times of the Jews, when there were whole tribes of inspired prophets; or of the Greeks, when men assembled from all sides at Delphos; or of the Romans, when no warrior would attempt any enterprise of importance without first consulting the entrails of victims and watching the flight of sacred birds; or of our ancestors, at the time of the crusades. Let us imagine, instead of the Jesuit Vieira, a prophet, a Pythoness, an Augur, or a Bernard; and the Brazilian revolution will immediately assume a supernatural colouring. It will be God, who, touched with the holy daring of this extraordinary personage, shall have raised up an avenger for the oppressed nation."

It is a pity that our ancestors were so much more credulous, and so much less exact than we.

R. D. OWEN.

SERMON ON FREE INQUIRY.

IF it be matter of regret that mankind are not more unanimous in their opinions, it is still more to be regretted that men are not even agreed to inquire freely, honestly, and unreservedly into these opinions. For, if Free Inquiry once became general, we should soon, by proving all things, discover and hold fast that which is good.

How strange, and how fatal the spell that must have been cast over the human mind, ere it was cheated into the belief, that Free Inquiry was sinful and ought to be discouraged; that there are some important subjects too holy to be scrutinized, and others which it is indecent to examine or discuss.

With every wish to judge charitably, I *cannot* impute other than a dishonest motive to him who may have first taught his fellow-creatures, that to be holy and pure, they must shut their eyes and their ears. I judge that such a doctrine had its origin in Knavery; and that it was inculcated by those who thought to subserve their own selfish ends by hood-winking and deceiving mankind. I can perceive no other possible motive for its dissemination. And I can readily understand why he who would establish his own infallibility, and lead men by their credulity, should dislike and discourage a spirit of inquiry among his followers.

I do not say that there are not, at this day, many who conscientiously believe free discussion to be dangerous and improper; for early impressions are exceedingly powerful, and can pervert the reason to an incredible degree; but I do conceive it impossible that this idea of plain, open sincerity on all subjects being sinful, should *originate*, except in selfish dishonesty. Thus it often happens, that rogues bring forward errors, and that honest men perpetuate them.

Without accusing, therefore, the conscientiously scrupulous or the sincerely prudish, of any thing but honest blindness, I do from my soul believe, that they are the innocent and unsuspecting abettors of selfish knaves. The *effects* of their conduct are similar to those that would result, if they were themselves arrant knaves; nay—the effects are often worse; for sincerity, however mistaken, carries with it a weight and a conviction, which the best put on hypocrisy commonly fails to obtain. Themselves

I respect ; and I should be the last to speak—or to think—harshly of their individual characters. Their principles I do not respect : I believe them to have been originally the principles of men who wished to tread on the necks of others, and to be cruel and selfish and unjust with impunity. I have reason to believe so. I see that the tyrants of the earth prohibit free inquiry, and I see that they profit by the prohibition. I see that they spread before their own authority, and before their own favourite doctrine, moral and religious, a mysterious veil ; and, when any daring spirit approaches to draw it aside, I hear them warn him back, and tell him : “ Thus far shalt thou come and no farther ; beyond it is impious to look.” I know what this means. I know why they call it impious. And any one who will venture to use his own eyes, may know it too.

Is a thing the better known for being kept secret ? or are truth and honesty the more respected for being little known ? No : the great ones and the holy ones of this earth may tell us, that it is for *our* sakes they fear free inquiry. It is not for ours, believe me, my readers ; it is for *theirs*. They fear free inquiry, because it might take from them their crowns and their mitres and their treasury boxes. They fear free inquiry, because they are sometimes inconsistent, and sometimes dishonest, in their principles. They do well to fear it ; it is not *their* friend. But it is *ours* ; it will check us when we are in error, and encourage us when we are right. Kings and priests may be false friends ; Free Inquiry is a true one. They bid us shut our eyes ; she bids us open them : they would have us believe ; she but requests us to examine. Beware the counsel that would cast suspicion on her usefulness ; it is, itself, a suspicious counsel.

It is the counsel of the weak, or the wicked. It may be orthodox ; it may be scriptural : it is not the better counsel on that account.

The Bible, unfortunately, whatever may have been the motives and intentions of its authors, lends itself but too ready a tool to those who would rob and deceive their fellows. It furnishes texts innumerable for despots. And if, in return, it inculcate liberality, and charity, and equality, these are past over, or explained away. Each preacher is free to select his text ; and if his attention be to blindfold his hearers, and make them the easier dupes, he will not choose such a sentiment as this : “ Prove all things, and hold fast that which is good :” Or “ Seek and ye shall find ;” or any similar exhortation to free inquiry. He will seek other texts ; and they are to be found.

Some weeks since, I attempted a sermon on Loyalty. It was somewhat barefaced, I believe ; otherwise it might have passed current well enough. Perhaps Free Inquiry might be another good subject. Let us see.

SERMON.

TEXT.—Genesis i. 17. *Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat.*

Let me remind you, my christian hearers, that every word of this Holy Volume is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. Not one verse which it contains is indifferent; not one may be passed over with impunity. Each has its important lesson, moral or religious. Every line may bring life to him who believes, or death to him who despises it.

Yet, in this constellation of heavenly truths, we shall find some more bright and glorious than the rest; shining upon us, at once with a searching and a healing light. Such is the story of man's fall. If we pass the sacred pages in review, we shall not, perhaps, find one narrative pregnant with more important consequences, or more useful lessons, than this.

Our first parents, the inspired historian informs us, lived in innocence and happiness, unknowing pain, or care, or sorrow; in a land of eternal spring, and in a garden of enduring verdure. Yet not long did such happiness last. There came a blight over it and nipped its fair blossoms; and it passed away. Eyes till then unstained by tears, were dimmed with weeping. Bosoms that no sigh had ever swelled, learned care and anguish. For the peace and the joys of Paradise, there was toil and sorrow. Immortality fled back to Heaven, and Death approached.

"And whence," you will ask me, "this dreary change? What master-crime had thus converted light to darkness, and bliss to misery? Did the first created imbrue their hands in blood, that they should forfeit Eden and its joys? Or did they curse their God, that they should die? What was the black transgression that sealed their doom, and sent them forth outcasts from the presence of their Creator? Name it, that we may learn to shun it, as we would the eye of the basilisk."

Ye say well. It is indeed a transgression to be shunned, as we would know God and live. Its poison is worse than the viper's sting, or the Upas' deadly moisture. Ye say well. It is for this I am here; to point to the rocks that threaten your frail bark on her voyage to another world, and to bid ye observe and avoid them.

Turn, then, to your Bible, and learn what the transgression was. *God planted the tree of life in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And the Lord God commanded the man, saying: Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.*

Thus, my christian friends, may ye learn—if indeed ye needed yet to learn it—how light and easy is the yoke that God imposes. He gave every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food. One only did he reserve for himself. One only proof of obedience did he exact from the creatures of his hand to whom he had given every thing; one little proof, that cost but a willing and submissive heart. But, alas for the depravity of man! that little proof was found wanting.

For the serpent said unto the woman: Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent: We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden; but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman: Ye shall not surely die; for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened; and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened.

Here, then, is this heinous transgression; not murder, not blasphemy, but, in its consequences, worse, more damning than either. This crime that has plunged the world in misery, that has given to Death his sting and to the Grave her victory—that crime for which millions on millions throughout the past ages of the world have suffered, and for which millions yet unborn shall suffer still—that crime is, AN IMPIOUS SEARCHING AFTER KNOWLEDGE.

Would that I could impress on your minds the deceitful nature and the dreadful consequences of this insidious propensity! Would that I could paint to ye the yawning pit which it covers, the Hell to which it leads! Would that I could place before ye, the cold-blooded doubt and impious inquiry, and then the seducing heresies and the horrible blasphemies, that follow in its train! Then should ye be safe; for who that could contemplate all the horrors of infidelity, and see the wrecks of earthly peace, and witness the utter extinction of our glorious hopes of heaven—who, I say, that could see and know all this, would madly dare the first presumptuous step?

Will ye tell me, that the danger is past? that there is among us no tree of the knowledge of good and evil, to tempt us with its poison fruit? Alas! alas! let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall. There is—would that there were not!—but there is among us the forbidden tree: and still, as of yore, it bears a fruit fair to the eye and sweet to the taste; and still, as of yore, are there found those who will pluck, and eat, and die.

Ye turn your eyes inquiringly on me, almost as though ye doubted my words. Look around ye, my christian friends! look through our degenerate land, and behold the blasting Upas! Do ye not hear of liberality, and of just knowledge, and of free inquiry? They are fair words, ay! and so also was the apple fair; yet it brought death.

Ye are free men, perhaps, and will not be restrained in your inquiries; ye would be as gods, knowing good and evil. Beware! it is the temptation of the Evil One. Ye call yourselves disciples of Reason, and ye have been persuaded to follow her wherever she lead. Beware! it is the voice of the serpent. What will it avail ye, when the lake of fire yawns to receive your souls—what will it avail ye then, that Reason's phantom led ye to the burning brink? Will it cool your parched tongues to know, that ye had argued yourselves into heresy; and that ye blasphemed in haughty consciousness of rectitude?

Ye think, perchance, that ye can examine and argue and inquire into all hidden things, and that your human reason will yet distinguish holy truths, and that your hearts will yet venerate them; ye think that ye may take one step and not two; that ye may doubt, and your doubts may be solved, and ye may yet remain faithful. I tell ye, nay. Once on the smooth road that leadeth to perdition, ye can no longer stop or save yourselves. Avoid the road then altogether; enter it not; turn from it, and pass away. *If ye* begin to inquire, ye will also begin to doubt; *if ye* begin to doubt, ye will soon learn to disbelieve; and *if ye* disbelieve, with the devil and his angels shall be your portion.

There are those who tell you, that human reason is your friend and your safe guide. She is *not* your friend, my christian hearers! she is *not* your safe guide. Human reason is daring and presumptuous; ye should be meek and lowly: she fears neither God above nor man below; ye must work out your salvation in fear and trembling: she, in her haughty self-sufficiency, must needs examine and judge and decide; ye, in holy humility, must hear and believe and submit: she thinks her own thoughts, and puts her trust in man; ye shall think the thoughts of your God, and in him only shall ye trust.

I seem to read in your looks of holy defiance, your contempt of the deep laid snare. I seem to read your resolution, when the tempter assails ye, to say: "'Get thee behind me, Satan!' With Hazael we would exclaim: 'Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?'" I rejoice in your pious courage; but, as ye value your immortal souls, trust not to it. The words of the prophet were fulfilled in Hazael; so shall my words be fulfilled in you, if that ye set up reason for your God.

Let us, my friends, for a moment, leave this world and its cares behind us ; let us together descend to the bottomless pit ; we shall there read a useful lesson. Let us together cross the great gulf, and stand on the banks of the fiery lake. And now, behold the picture. Gaze on the agonizing scene. See the writhings and the tossings of tormented hopelessness ; see the imploring looks of wild despair. Listen to the ceaseless sighs that burst from burning hearts, never, never again to be quieted ! Think that centuries shall revolve and worlds pass from existence, without change or alleviation or hope for them. Think that millions on millions of centuries shall pass, and find them writhing and tossing and tortured still ; still imploring for one drop of water to cool the parched tongue, and still refused even that one drop ! Sum up all the worst, deepest, bitterest woes that ye have felt or imagined on earth—one moment in that flame outweighs them all. Then add moment to moment and age to age, until your mind refuses to comprehend eternity—and still ye shall fail to conceive even the commencement of Hell !

But stop ! turn not, shuddering, from the scene, ere ye read its moral. What fiend peopled this region of horrors ? Ask the poor victims. They chose Reason for their Deity, and she led them hither. The repentant thief and the contrite murderer ascended to Heaven ; but in Hell does the proud votary of reason lift up his eyes ; in Hell does he expiate—if indeed its heinousness can ever be expiated—the sin of presumptuous curiosity. In all the black catalogue of human crimes, this is the blackest. The reckless Roman dared to draw aside the sacred veil, and to enter the Holy of Holies, and on Pharsalia's plain did he meet his reward. Will ye imitate his example ? at the day of judgment shall ye meet yours.

Trifle not, then, with sacred mysteries ; lay not your human hands upon them ; approach them not with your sacrilegious reason. Will ye not trust to God, unless, with impious suspicion, ye first examine his sacred word, and scrutinize his holy decrees ? In that very suspicion there is death. Ye must come to God as little children, confiding, trusting, believing all things ; not inquiring or doubting. God will not be tampered with ; who art thou, oh man, that repliest against him ? It is enough that ye mistrust one another ; insult not the most High with your surmises. If ye have reached forth your hands and put your fingers in the print of the nails, what merit is there in your belief ? But blessed is he that hath not seen nor understood, and yet hath believed.

Ye have not to think for yourselves ; God thinks for ye. Ye have not to ask "*Why* are these things ?" ye have but to know and feel *that they* are. God did not write for ye, that ye should criticise his writings ; but that ye should believe them. He

will not have ye seeking to be wise and prudent, and to know good and evil. He will have ye submissive and humble, as babes. He has told ye what is good, and what is evil; wherefore, then, should ye yet seek, by reason, to discover it?

All the other trees in the garden has God in his infinite goodness given ye for food, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, ye shall not eat. The command is plain, peremptory, positive: ye *shall not eat*. The accompanying threat is equally positive. *In the day that ye eat thereof, ye shall surely die*. Death is the punishment, not of wilful unbelief only, but of suspicious inquiry! Not alone he that wickedly despises, but he also that rashly approaches, has already merited his doom. And wisely and mercifully is the punishment thus severe. Inquiry is the first entrance to vice and infidelity; and well it is for us, that God guards it with jealous care; and that, to save his saints from doubt and death, he debars them from this strongest of human temptations.

Were our Creator less considerate, he might permit us to wrestle with the Evil One, and then justly punish us for our defeat. But he graciously forbids the combat. He will not have us enter the lists with Satan; for he knows that the children of this world are, in their generation, wiser than the children of light. He knows that in worldly arguments the infidel will prove an overmatch for us; and therefore he forbids us to argue.

Profit, then, my brethren, by his tender mercy, and expose not yourselves to the arrows of the wicked. Inquire not; examine not; criticise not; argue not. Why would ye be smitten before your enemies?

In faith and hope and humility there is life and safety; but in free inquiry there is disbelief and death. In wisdom, there is not only sorrow, there is also everlasting punishment. Eve desired to be made wise, and she reaped death—death for herself, and eternal death for countless myriads of her descendants. The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God; and therefore are the things that appertain to salvation hidden from the wise and prudent. Seek not ye, therefore, wisdom or prudence; but seek faith and humility.

Does this counsel sound harshly in your ears? does it jar on your earthly pride? It may be: for pride goeth before destruction. Do ye dream of the dignity of human wisdom, and the noble consciousness of mental independence? Dream on then: be wise; be dignified; be independent; be free inquirers—rudely and fearfully shall that haughty dream be broken. The last day shall dawn, and the last trumpet sound. Ye shall awake! happy if ye could but have slept on, in eternal forgetfulness!

ON PUBLIC WORSHIP.

ALL kinds of prayer, worship, or supplication are indicative that the being to whom they are addressed is either ignorant of, or careless about, the wants of the addressers; and one would be led to believe, from a view of the many different modes of public worship, that every sect had a different object of adoration.

Let us take a slight glance at two or three systems that have made a great figure in theological history, bearing in mind that each different system has been considered by its votaries as the only true one.

The Jews, ignorant of an infinite universe, and contracting their ideas within the sphere of objects surveyed by themselves, represent their god as having, previously to the existence of the scenes they viewed, spent an eternity without motion; and as having, after he had conceived the plan of creating man, taken six days to complete the earth for his abode, and the sun and stars as secondary to its uses. Man was made in God's own image, and afterwards separated into two distinct beings or sexes. It seems to have been intended they should remain for ever in ignorance; but, behold, the plan was again altered, and the poor, innocent, and harmless pair were allowed to fall from their simplicity. Although he had made them so simple, their god was so terribly enraged, that he immediately laid a curse upon them and their posterity. After permitting the race to work iniquity in his sight for about two thousand years, he drowns all except one family, though he must certainly have known that their progeny would be as bad as those he had destroyed. At another grand epoch of their history, they inform us that God saw it was necessary to let his will be known to have it obeyed; and therefore he delivered to Moses a code of rules for the instruction of this chosen tribe.

The worship of this deity consists in offering up smells of sweet savour to his olfactory nerves, in meats boiled or roasted, and in ceremonies that are absolutely ridiculous performed by priests in the dress of buffoons.

The Christians have taken up the fable where the Jews left off, and they have fashioned, with the assistance of a more recent publication of divine revelation, a ponderous fabric of worship. They have made the indivisible one God of this chosen

people to divide himself into three parts, and they believe that one of those parts went into the womb of a girl, to be born in the common way, to lead an obscure existence employed at a mechanical trade, and, at last, to be put to the death of a malefactor! and all this to satisfy his wrath against poor silly mortals, who acted according to the passions he had given them, and who, according to their own dogmas, must go wrong the moment they are left without his immediate superintendence. The Christians would persuade us that by the efficacy of this third part son, who is his own father, and who died for the purpose of saving mankind from his own vengeance, a very few of the human race, in every generation, are brought to salvation, and those happy few are only such as have been elected by the father from all eternity; so that the death of this son, this only son, has been of no avail, because the elected number must be saved, and all the rest of mankind were condemned to eternal misery long before they were called into existence. On the other hand, the elect are conducted to a place they call heaven, not for their good works nor as a reward for moral rectitude, but because they were made expressly for that happy but undescribed situation.

The Christians, like the Jews, have their public worship every seventh day, consisting in ceremonies, adulations, and prayers, enacted by priests enrobed in black gowns.

A modern system of revelation, believed in by a greater number of mankind than either of the former, is the system of worship practised by the followers of Mahomet, the best and only true prophet. Their Koran is a book written by the finger of God, and handed down from heaven leaf by leaf—it is a tissue of absurdities founded on the ancient fables of the Pagans, Jews, and Christians. They consider that by observing their rules of faith and practice and attending public worship, which consists of ablutions, prayers, thanksgivings, and adorations once in the week, they will be conducted over the infernal gulph by a bridge as narrow as a hair and as sharp as a razor, to the mansion of eternal felicity, where there will be rivers of milk and honey, and groves and gardens of the finest fruit trees and aromatic spices; where they will live in uninterrupted intercourse with the most beautiful females, whose virginity will be perpetually renewed, and where the vigour of the men will be renovated at their pleasure.

These three distinguished systems pretend each to have the only true revelation. Each is believed in from the effects of education, and not from reason: the plans of worship practised by each sect are different, but equally absurd.

Whenever the fact of the eternity of the universe has been disregarded, and whenever an attempt has been made by ignorance to imagine an object of worship, has not such been always represented as a changeable, capricious, and revengeful being?

In public worship, each party entreat him to direct and protect them, as being his own peculiar people; they flatter him with the most fulsome adulation; they speak to him and of him just as a being of their own species; they call him infinitely powerful, wise, just, merciful, and good: and they effect to worship him as the meanest slaves would approach the most terrific tyrant.

Let us shake from our minds the prejudices of our early education; let us wipe from our eyes the mist of superstition, and investigate the phenomena of nature with an anxious desire to arrive at the knowledge of truth. When we survey the world and the animated races that inhabit it; when we contemplate the solar system and acquaint ourselves with the order of planetary motion; when we branch forth our ideas into the immensity of space, beyond the observation of our own limited faculties; when we explore the interminable universe of similar modes of existence—when thinking man contemplates these things, he can perceive the impossibility of a comprehender existing for that which is without comprehension, or of creating a beginning for that which has the power of perpetuating itself. Existing things have been created by past things, and future things will be formed by things present. From our experience of nature, we know that every event is produced in regular order; every kind of being exists by natural causes, and on the dissolution of individuals depends the maintenance of their races. Nature is production and destruction, and every being is necessarily subjected to this common condition.

From the incomprehensibility of the universe, we may judge it folly to join in any kind of worship of its fancied comprehender. Let us, then, as rational men, inquire into the actual realities of existence; let us study science, and instruct one another in useful knowledge. Let us divest our minds of superstition, and particularly avoid the folly of worshipping an ignorantly imagined deity; let us boldly throw off a credulous respect for ancient errors, and assemble ourselves together for the benefit of mutual instruction; and let us apply our minds to things that we can comprehend, rather than lose ourselves in the fanciful idea of comprehending that which we know is not limited nor comprehensible.

THE END.

SITUATIONS:

**LAWYERS—CLERGY—PHYSICIANS—MEN AND
WOMEN.**

BY ROBERT DALE OWEN.

**He is immorally situated, whose apparent interest tells him one thing,
and his duty another.**

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SITUATIONS.

OF LAWYERS.

THE situation in which the members of the most influential classes in society find themselves placed, appears to me conducive neither to their own probity and happiness, nor to the welfare of the community. I am convinced that very many of the errors that prevail throughout our country, and very much of the difficulty which exists in removing these errors, may be traced to this source. I should conceive it much more easy to cure men of their credulities, and to establish rational virtue among them, if it were no one's apparent interest to make them credulous or quarrelsome. In like manner, I should expect much less disease among mankind, if physicians were remunerated according to the measure of health, and not according to the measure of disease, that exists around them.

Not that I attribute to lawyers, as a body, the deliberate intention to sow dissensions; nor to the clergy, as a body, an organized plan of attack on our credulity; nor to physicians, as a body, the desire to see disease prevail. But there are degrees of dishonesty; and a strong temptation placed before a whole class of men is seldom without its effects. In illustration of these general observations, let us examine the situation and the temptations of one of these professions, that of the lawyers.

To the professed object of the law and lawyers no one will object. Men act unjustly towards each other; and it is desirable that such injustice should be remedied: men quarrel; and it is desirable that they should be reconciled. The law professes to remedy injustice and to reconcile quarrels, and if its practice corresponded to its professions, law would be one of the greatest blessings in social life. Is it so? Is law a blessing to this, or to any other country? Are lawyers the promoters of peace, harmony, and kindness? Are they not, even proverbially, the reverse?

I will ask yet more: is it not the positive, pecuniary interest of the lawyer, that injustice should spread, and quarrels increase, around him? Ought it to be the interest of any one individual in society that his fellow creatures should be immoral and unhappy? OUGHT ANY MAN TO LIVE BY HIS NEIGHBOUR'S VICES? Do not lawyers live, directly and continually, by their neighbours' vices?

Again: Is it not the positive, pecuniary interest of lawyers that the system of law should be complicated, and that it should be expensive? And is it not the positive pecuniary interest of mankind, that the system of law should *not* be complicated, and should *not* be expensive? Are not lawyers therefore, when called upon to simplify the legal code, called upon to take the money out of their own pockets, in order to benefit their fellow-citizens? IS NOT THIS A VITIATING SITUATION?

If the world were honest and virtuous, would not lawyers starve? Are not lawyers poor, in proportion as honesty and virtue prevail? If the lawyer, then, in common with other men, labours to make money, must he not feel that honesty and virtue are, virtually, his enemies? If a Devil exist, can he place his children more favourably for vice than this?

I would that I could adequately express the importance which I attach to these questions, and to their answers. If lawyers were few in number, and uninfluential in rank, and contemptible in talent, the evil were trifling. But they swarm over our land; three-fourths of our legislators and governors have risen to their situations through the law; and the best talents of our country are developed at the bar. The influence of lawyers, in these United States, is overwhelming. It is considerably greater, as I believe, than that of the clergy.

When a young man evinces, or is imagined to evince, uncommon talents, he is educated for the bar; that, thus, he may rise to honour and distinction. Study and practice render him eloquent, perhaps; and eloquence is all-powerful in a republic like ours. He learns to argue speciously and smoothly, if not soundly; and smooth and specious arguments lead easy, indolent man, almost to any absurdity.

Thus the most talented—and, because the most talented, the most influential also—among our youth, are trained to a profession, the interests of which are against every man, and every man's interests against it. We elect them as our representatives and rulers; and we expect them to legislate for our benefit. One would imagine that we thought human nature could not be injured by any situation, nor seduced by any temptations. One would imagine that we thought all men so disinterestedly good, that they might be safely trusted to act and to legislate against themselves.

I hope and believe that there are honest, worthy men among lawyers, as among monarchs. Because I doubt whether any profession, however vitiating, be effectual to corrupt some noble characters. There are those who will pass through the fire of temptation, and come out, like platina, only brighter and purer. But the virtues of the mass of mankind are not of platina. They melt and disappear, when too strongly tried; and, therefore, the experiment is an unwise and an improper one.

Power is dangerous at all times and in any hands. Let us not add to the danger, by placing it in the hands of those who must sacrifice their own interests to legislate for ours. Let us not demand too much, that we be not disappointed. Our public officers require all the aid which situation can give them, to act and to legislate wisely and justly. It is to be regretted, that their previous profession should add to their difficulties.

I can see no remedy for the manifold evils that result from the present system of law and legislation, except in paying our lawyers otherwise than according to our vices; or else, in choosing our legislators elsewhere than from among lawyers.

OF THE CLERGY.

IN our last number I expressed my conviction that lawyers are a class of men unfavourably situated; unfavourably for themselves, and unfavourably for society. Yet I do not think them singular in that respect; for the situation of our clergy seems to me equally unfortunate.

Any extraneous temptation to hold, right or wrong, to our opinions, has an immoral and injurious tendency. It frequently acts as a bounty on falsehood. It sometimes induces hypocrisy. It awakens in us an artificial partiality for our own creed, which is the more prejudicial, inasmuch as we are already, from vanity and habit, much too prone to such partiality. It creates an artificial animosity against all dissenters from our creed; and this too is exceedingly pernicious; seeing that frail human nature is already but too much given to intolerance, and that intolerance is the bane of all kindness and virtue in society. It bids us shrink from free inquiry, however useful; and fear conviction, however well founded; while conscientiousness requires us to welcome free inquiry, and to yield implicitly to conviction. It acts as a draw-back on the discovery of truth and the correction of error.

Thus all artificial inducements to adhere to any creed are mischievous. They add fuel to flame; they increase evils already too great; they flatter our weaknesses, and encourage

our vices. We are addicted to selfish partiality; they increase the propensity. We are inclined to be uncharitable; they render us yet more so. We fear to throw off our prejudices; they add to the fear. The progress of improvement is slow; they tend yet more to retard it.

Now, it is true that the clergy are not alone exposed to this artificial temptation. There exists, in all countries, and for all men, a premium upon orthodoxy; that is, a premium upon all opinions and customs which are generally received. Men win favour, gain patronage, obtain popularity, and make money by adopting and defending these. Thus favour, and patronage, and popularity, and money, become so many prizes, offered by society as the reward of conformity.

But if all men are thus tempted in the degree, the clergy are so in the extreme. They have been trained as the servants and supporters of a religious system. As its servants and supporters they win a livelihood; and most of them have learnt no other profession. With their faith, therefore, they lose also their livelihood, unless they will consent to act the hypocrite. At the moment they become converts, they become beggars also; unless they will resolve to begin the world again, and learn to labour for their support. Their profession and its emoluments are their only property; and they cannot become honest sceptics, except under penalty of its confiscation.

How immoral, how vitiating is such a situation! How filled with temptations to evil, and inducements to dishonesty! What sacrifices does it require of him who may chance to see beyond the creed of his forefathers, and who has not learnt to say what he does not think! How richly it rewards hypocrisy! and how heavily it clogs the wheels of improvement!

What should be said to such a law as this: "*whoever shall dissent from the popular creed, and shall openly express such dissent, the whole of his property shall immediately be confiscated; he shall be forbidden from following his trade, and a vote of public censure shall be passed upon him.*" How would our feelings revolt from such injustice! How should we denounce and detest it, as republicans—as men! Yet such injustice as this is practised daily by our free republic towards one oppressed class of her citizens, the clergy. I say oppressed, not by any means in jest or irony, but in sad sincerity and sober truth. I say oppressed, because I most conscientiously believe the clergy to be so; oppressed by their situation; oppressed by its temptations; and grievously oppressed by the penalties that attach to an honest change of belief.

It is indeed true, that a clergyman, if he cease to be religious and cease to profess religion, may follow some other profession; and, if he be fortunate, may save himself from penury. But so

may any other malefactor, whose property has been confiscated. He also may labour and gain more. There is but little mercy in such an alternative as that.

I know that the clergy do not consider themselves oppressed, and are seldom considered so by others; but it is not necessary to oppression, that its victims should know or appreciate their situation. For myself, no earthly consideration should induce me so to place myself, that I should be richly rewarded so long as I retained my present opinions, and that I should be punished with confiscation of property and loss of livelihood, if ever I saw cause to change them. And, surely any man who values his liberty and his rights, will agree with me in the opinion.

I have known several instances, both in this country and in Great Britain, of clergymen, who were clear-sighted enough to perceive the errors they had been trained to preach, and honest enough to cease preaching them. I particularly recollect one instance in England. It is that of a pastor, who was universally beloved for his amiable qualities, and universally respected and admired for his talents and eloquence. He became converted to heterodoxy; stated from the pulpit that he was so; threw up a large salary, and retired to spend the rest of his days in obscurity and poverty, followed by the blessings and regrets of all who knew him. The circumstance did not become very generally known, for his brethren of the church hushed it up; and I learned it by accident from a gentleman who was personally acquainted with him.

But conduct like this is not more noble than it is rare. I were unreasonable to expect it from the mass of mankind; because experience tells us that our expectations would be disappointed. If society *will* tempt her members, she must bear the consequences. If she *will* offer a reward for hypocrisy, and enact punishments for honesty, she must expect to find rogues and hypocrites. Who shall sow the seed, and then wonder that the grain springs up?

I perceive no remedy for these errors, so long as it shall be considered a trade to support the orthodox creed. But I do not perceive the necessity nor the advantage of such a trade. We are sufficiently inclined already to retain the creeds and the prejudices which our fathers have bequeathed to us. We are averse enough to free inquiry and rational change. Let us not tempt any of our fellow-citizens to foster our prejudices and restrain our inquiries.

OF PHYSICIANS.

PHYSICIANS appear to be less unfavourably situated than their brethren of the bar and of the church; for we may be friendly and virtuous without depriving physicians of their livelihood. Yet are they also, to a certain extent, viciously situated.

It is a very common opinion that men and women cannot be trained to be their own physicians; and it is probable that there are cases of rare or complicated disease, or of dangerous accident, in which the experience gained by extensive medical practice, may be necessary to suggest a remedy, or to perform an operation. But in nine cases, at least, out of ten, a very moderate acquaintance with the human body, and with its functions, and with the causes that impair, and the precautions that preserve these, would enable us with ease to cure, or, yet better, to prevent, the nascent indisposition. This is a fact which has repeatedly been acknowledged, both in private and in public, by the most eminent physicians. And its accuracy is the less to be doubted, inasmuch as it is notoriously the pecuniary interest of physicians to conceal it.

Admitting, then, its truth, how injurious the ignorance in which children are kept of what it most concerns them to know! And how desirable, that a few, at least, of the days and years that are spent in learning the languages and the customs of two semi-barbarous nations of antiquity, should be devoted to learn that, the knowledge of which will advantage us every day of our lives.

But, however desirable for the mass of mankind, that they should be taught how to retain that first of blessings, health; and that they should further be taught how to regain it, when lost;—it is *not* the interest of the physician. It is not his interest, that his neighbours should know any thing about their own bodies: it is not his interest that they should be taught how to retain their health, nor how to arrest an incipient malady by some simple remedy. Other men's ignorance is his gain. Their follies fill his purse. If they were educated as common sense dictates, he would be a poorer man. If they knew what they ought to know, his knowledge would turn to less account. Common sense, therefore is, in a pecuniary point of view, the physician's enemy.

Again, how important is it that men and women should know the consequences of excess; and that, knowing these, they should not be tempted to act against their knowledge! How inexpressibly important that there should be no gin-shops, nor any of those houses—the bane of great cities—where popular morality abandons to disease and death its outcast victims!

Yet it is the physician's interest that all this should go on. Intemperance is his patron. A debauch is a harvest for him. Gin-shops and brothels make him a rich man. Each ruined constitution brings him a customer and a fee. He may, doubtless he does, lament all this, for no one knows all its horrors as he does; but he must be more or less than man, if he does not feel that he lives by it.

The physician knows that the customs and the morality which are now popular, produce both vice and disease. The honest and enlightened physician will tell you so. He will tell you, that monkish chastity and brutal license are, equally, the causes of misery and disease. He will tell you, that health and peace of mind, are to be found in moderation only, and that *extremes* have filled his consulting-room and his purse. Ask him how it happens that so many of the young and unmarried of both sexes appear on the list of his patients; and he will tell you of the prudish severity with which society dooms one sex to unnatural restraints, and of the temporizing injustice with which she winks at the scarcely-veiled libertinism of the other. Ask him what *he* thinks of the professions of the popularly moral; and he will tell you that they are commonly as hollow, as the reality of these professions were unnatural and pernicious. Ask him what *he* thinks of orthodox morality in itself; and he will tell you, that *as a physiologist*, he disapproves and condemns it. But, as a physician, he profits by it; unwillingly, indeed, if he be an honest and a worthy man, but yet positively and certainly. If society's customs, and society's morality, encouraged moderation in all things, and discountenanced, not whatever was opposed to her capricious etiquette, but whatever was opposed to health of body and tranquillity of mind—men would be happier and better; but physicians would lose their practice.

However beneficial, therefore, it might be, that we should know our own diseases, and learn to prevent and to cure them, we must not expect that physicians, as a class, will take much pains to destroy their own avocation. We must not expect them to tell us (however well they know it), that we are the best judges of our own sensations; that we can detect symptoms in ourselves that are hidden from them; that we have the most experience of our own constitutions; and that thus, *even with an inferior knowledge of medical science*, we can prescribe much more readily and rationally for ourselves, than any other person can for us. We must not expect that physicians will risk at once their reputation and their fortunes in order to tell us, that if we were but rational and practical physiologists, we should regret the morality which now prevails, as unnatural, and productive of suffering and disease: nor can we require

that physicians should labour zealously to promote temperance and thus to prevent diseases. All this it were unreasonable to expect, because men do not like to ruin themselves, nor even to diminish their own earnings.

If we wish to make it the interest of physicians that mankind be temperate, prudent, rational, and healthy, let us pay them, like the medical attendant of the Chinese Emperor, in proportion as we escape disease; but if we desire to make ourselves independent and usefully intelligent, let us go still farther. Let us recollect, that to be a practical physiologist, is incomparably more important, than to be a latinist or a greekling. If *we* are too old to learn, let us give our children a knowledge of themselves; let us bid them attend carefully to their own sensations; let us gradually make them their own physicians. We shall not then see them first ruining their own constitutions, and then paying to have them patched up again. We shall not see them tempting disease and death with their eyes shut, and horror struck when at last they discover the natural consequences of their conduct; ignorantly imprudent to-day, and weakly apprehensive to-morrow; committing excesses one hour, and soliciting prescriptions the next. As, when we are our own servants, our wants diminish, so, if we were our own physicians, would our diseases decrease.

OF MEN AND WOMEN.

WASHINGTON IRVING, a writer of brilliant, engaging talents, rather than of sound or useful principles, tells us, in the first volume of his *Sketch Book*, a touching little story, entitled "The Broken Heart." It is so feelingly told, that one regrets to learn, as I did, from those to whom the real facts were personally known, how little truth it contains. But, true or not, the sentiment, in proof of which it is adduced—"that there is such a thing as a broken heart, and death from disappointed affections"—will scarcely be denied by those who have seen the world as it exists, and known something of the better sort of their fellow-creatures.

It is but an invidious task to criticise so pretty a trifle as that to which I have referred; nor is there any thing, perhaps, in the story itself, that calls for criticism. Yet do I believe, that this very story, told as Irving tells it, and accompanied by the reflections which he has prefixed to it, is calculated to produce, and has produced, infinite mischief.

I shall be better understood by placing before our readers some of these reflections.

"Man is the creature of interest and ambition. His nature leads him forth into the struggle and bustle of the world. Love is but the embellishment of his early life, or a song piped in the intervals of the acts. He seeks for fame, for fortune, for space in the world's thought, and dominion over his fellow men. But a woman's whole life is a history of the affections. The heart is her world: it is there her ambition, strives for empire; it is there her avarice seeks for hidden treasures. She sends forth her sympathies on adventure; she embarks her whole soul in the traffic of affection; and, if shipwrecked, her case is hopeless—for it is a bankruptcy of the heart.

"To a man, the disappointment of love may occasion some bitter pangs: it wounds some feelings of tenderness—it blasts some prospects of felicity; but he is an active being—he may dissipate his thoughts in the whirl of varied occupation, or may plunge into the tide of pleasure; or, if the scene of disappointment be too full of painful associations, he can shift his abode at will, and taking, as it were, the wings of the morning, can 'fly to the uttermost parts of the earth, and be at rest.'

"But woman's is comparatively a fixed, a secluded, and a meditative life. She is more the companion of her own thoughts and feelings; and, if they are turned to ministers of sorrow, where shall she look for consolation? Her lot is to be wooed and won; and, if unhappy in her love, her heart is like some fortress that has been captured, and sacked, and abandoned, and left desolate.

"How many bright eyes grow dim—how many soft cheeks grow pale—how many lovely forms fade away into the tomb, and none can tell the cause that blighted their loveliness! As the dove will clasp its wings to its side, and cover and conceal the arrow that is preying on its vitals, so is it the nature of woman to hide from the world the pangs of wounded affection. The love of a delicate female is always shy and silent. Even when fortunate, she scarcely breathes it to herself; but when otherwise, she buries it in the recesses of her bosom, and there lets it cower and brood among the ruins of her peace. With her the desire of the heart has failed. The great charm of existence is at an end. She neglects all the cheerful exercises which gladden the spirits, quicken the pulse, and send the tide of life in healthful currents through the veins. Her rest is broken—the sweet refreshment of sleep is poisoned by melancholy dreams—'dry sorrow drinks her blood,' until her enfeebled frame sinks under the slightest external injury. Look for her, after a little while, and you find friendship weeping over her untimely grave, and wondering that one, who but lately glowed with all the radiance of health and beauty, should so speedily be brought down to 'darkness and the worm.' You will be

told of some wintry chill, some casual indisposition, that laid her low;—but no one knows of the mental malady that previously sapped her strength, and made her so easy a prey to the spoiler."

It is not so much that I object to this as a matter of fact, though I think it extravagant and exaggerated. Unfortunately the picture, though overdrawn, is not without an original in real life. It is not, therefore, to the facts in themselves that I offer any objections, but it is chiefly to the tone and manner of relating them, and to the delusive and mischievous influence which that tone and manner usurps over the young and the inexperienced and the warm-hearted.

If Irving had simply stated, that in society, as custom and education had formed it throughout the civilized world, man is a being of many interests and varied occupations, pained but not crushed by disappointment, learning from experience, often profiting by his very errors, and becoming a wiser and a better being after having passed through the bitterness of adversity—and that woman is but too frequently a creature of engrossing sympathies and helpless dependencies; without an interest except to please and captivate; without an occupation except to win and secure some wayward heart; leaning on others, instead of trusting to herself; ruined if but once deceived, and shut out from the lessons of experience—if Irving had thus expressed it, he would not have deceived or misled any one. It is true the story of the broken heart would have lost some of its romantic interest. But then, to make up for the loss, Irving would have touched upon and exposed one of the worst evils of social life. And, though he might have won from his countrywomen less of their interest and sympathy for his tale, yet he might have done that which is much better worth a man's ambition. He might have contributed to form their judgments, to raise their condition, to establish their independence, and to secure their permanent well-being. It is a pity that authors so seldom weigh—or, it were perhaps more correct to say, so seldom know how to weigh—the ultimate influence of the books they write.

In barbarous ages, men profited by their superior strength to render women submissively helpless and dependent. At the present day, when better and kindlier feelings have sprung up, they begin to admire and bepraise that very helplessness and dependence. They invent soft names and pretty phrases for weaknesses and failings; and soft names and pretty phrases are very efficacious in perpetuating folly. It seems as if men, by a very inconsistent species of selfishness, would have women interesting, at the expense of common sense; and it is certain, that by their sentimental prettinesses, they very often make

them so. Here is Washington Irving, who, though he does not say, in express terms, that woman is formed for the sole and only purpose of gaining man's affections—that she lives but in man's smiles, and dies when these smiles are withdrawn—though he does not, as I said, expressly tell us all this, yet it is very distinctly implied in his tale and its moral. Women are thus taught to believe, that, though we do not venture to claim the privilege, as in the East, of shutting them out from all the varied interests of life, in a Harem, yet we expect them to live but for us, and to interpret our favour into happiness, and our frowns into misery.

For my own part, I think the Turks are much more consistent. They carry their principle through, openly, undisguisedly. Like Washington Irving, they believe that “a woman's whole life is the history of the affections, and that the heart is her world;” and, therefore, they exclude her from every business or occupation that interests themselves. They make her, emphatically, “the companion of her own thoughts and feelings;” and, if her lord prove false and fickle, her heart is indeed “like some fortress that has been captured, and sacked, and abandoned, and left desolate.” Let us exaggerate our own case as we may, we must yet confess that women, among the Asiatics, are much more the subjects of one passion, and much more inevitably its victims, than women among us: and, if they are interesting in proportion to their weakness and dependence, that they are much more interesting there than here.

But it is surely worth reflecting, whether this principle be correct in itself, or beneficial in its consequences. It is worth inquiring, whether the situation which the author of the *Sketch Book* tacitly assigns to one half of his species, be a natural and a rational situation, or an artificial and an injurious one. It is worth examining, whether the cares, and the hopes, and the interests, and the business, and the improvement of this world, can beneficially be made the exclusive occupation of man, and whether woman's mind and heart ought to know no cares, nor hopes, nor interests, nor business, except this one of dependent, engrossing love. Love, it seems, is but “an embellishment to the life of man, a song piped in the intervals of the acts.” Must it, in the life of woman, be the Aaron's serpent swallowing up all the rest, and often turning its poison sting on the bosom that harboured it?

When mankind begin to value reason, and to cherish human liberty, these will not be the only questions that will obtrude themselves, in connexion with woman's situation and interests. They will begin to inquire whether it is rational or useful that the ready sensibilities and quick affections of women be pre-

cociously and exclusively cultivated. They will begin to ask : Ought woman's happiness to be endangered and wrecked, that she may form a better subject for a sentimental tale, or a better heroine for a romantic tragedy ? Is the peace of her life to be placed within the reach of every selfish trifler who may chance to gain her affections, and who may prove too ignorant, or too heartless, to value what he has gained ? Is the first fancy of youth to ruin all the best prospects of maturer age ? Is there nothing to win the attention, to engage the sympathies, to awaken the ambition, to occupy the thoughts, and to gain the feelings of woman, but one only passion ? Is science devoid of attractions, and is the welfare and improvement of mankind without interest for her ? May not she, too, be an active being ? may not she, too, find in varied occupations, and useful researches, and public-spirited endeavours, relief from the weight of early disappointment ? Why must she sit in passive sorrow, idle, secluded, brooding over one delusive dream, forever the companion of her own desponding recollections ? For one loss is she to become a bankrupt ? Because one venture has failed, is she therefore to sit down in supine despair ?

If all this must be, we can but regret and lament it. But wherefore *must* it be ? Why must woman, any more than man, be a being of one occupation, one passion, one interest only ? Wherefore must the volume of Nature be shut up from her ; or, if left open to her, why must it lose all its charm and interest, because she has once been mistaken or deceived ? If the scene of disappointment be too full of painful recollections, why may not she too, like man, shift her abode at will, and seek rest elsewhere ?

Custom can find very pretty, specious replies to these questions ; but the time is coming, when custom will not be considered infallible ; and when reasons must be more than pretty and specious, in order to be recognized as rational, or sanctioned as just. The time is coming when these, and yet more startling questions, will be freely asked and freely answered.

How happens it that there is but one unpardonable vice, and one sacred virtue, for woman ? How happens it, that she may be wilful, capricious, perverse, jealous, ill-tempered, careless, ignorant, selfish, a spendthrift, a detractress—all with popular impunity, if she be, or appear to be, what the world calls chaste ? How happens it, that in her, talents, and honesty, and temper, and generous feeling, and independence of spirit, and benevolence, and disinterestedness, are all too light to outweigh the single, venial crime—if crime it must be called—of offending against the forms and etiquette of orthodox morality ? How happens it that man's constancy and chastity are but single, individual items in our estimate of his character ;

and that, in woman's, they are made to constitute the one thing needful, without which, scarcely any virtue can entitle to respect; and with which, scarcely any vice can degrade to dishonour?

How happens it?—It happens because men have chosen to attach more importance to their own selfish fancies, than to the well-being and the real virtue of women. It happens, because an offence against man's vanity has been idly interpreted into a heavier crime than the worst offence against social welfare. It happens, because our customs and our prejudices took their rise in a period when men were lords and masters, and women were closetted slaves: and because, although the lord and master's virtues are many and various, the slave's virtues are all comprehended in one word, OBEDIENCE.

But a time is coming when it will happen no longer. A time is coming when the indefeasible rights of mankind will be recognized and received. Then will the monopoly of sex perish with other unjust monopolies; and women will not be restricted to one virtue, and one passion, and one occupation. Mothers will not tell their daughters, that the object of life is to gain a husband and an establishment; nor will novels teach, that the first sting of wounded affection contains a poison against which, in woman's case, there is no antidote to be gathered in the whole wide garden of life. Neither men nor women will then be expected, because they may have been once deceived, to spend their after-lives in lamenting the deception. Men and women will be equally judged, not by a whimsical or a selfish etiquette, but by their real virtue; by their adherence to honour and justice; by the sweetness of their tempers; by the qualities of their hearts. Men and women will equally be encouraged to explore the fields of science, and to aid in the great work of human improvement. Men and women will equally be allowed to profit by experience; and, if they have committed an error, to remedy and survive it. They will equally be taught to listen to the voice of suffered miseries, not as to the knell of their future fate, but as to the words of a friendly monitor, dearly purchased and highly to be prized; and they will equally be permitted, if they have strayed from the paths of moderation and virtue, to return to a better and a happier life, like the prodigal son to the arms of his father; and to learn prudence from past excesses, and wisdom from former faults.

R. D. O.

BENEFITS OF RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT.

THE United States of America are the only people who have been permitted to make experiments and produce results on which we can reason; and even they were opposed in every step by strong prejudices, some superstition, and a mass of ancient habits, which impeded, and do still retard, correct results; but such as they are, being the only ones, we must make the most of them. Their experiments have proven the following propositions, as clear as any in Euclid, viz.—

A government is better *without* than with a state religion.

A people can govern themselves peaceably when every member of the community is eligible to elect and be elected to every place of trust and power.

When the sovereign power is in the mass of the people, no force is necessary to keep the peace or execute the laws: of course there is no need of standing armies, or any kind of regular troops.

A free militia, who elect their own officers, are the best defence of a free nation.

That the operations of government may be carried on at little expense, without in the smallest degree interfering with any of the rights or occupations of any of the citizens.

That the knowledge and exertions of one free man is worth the labour of ten slaves.

That the most depraved in society, the convicts, condemned to hard labour, are reformed and made an example to others, so as to decrease the quantum of crime better by hope than fear.

That the free and uncontrolled circulation of knowledge and property, is a power, the force of which has no limits.

That a representation by Universal Suffrage, forms a more perfect government than any of those where the right of electing is limited to the possessors of certain property.

That the shorter time a man is in power, the stronger is the influence of the motive in favour of the governed, and the weaker the motive in favour of power inherent in the governors.

That the only practicable responsibility for men in place is public opinion, manifested through annual elections.

That the faithful and upright execution of any office of trust, is in the inverse ratio of the amount of the salary; and that small, moderate salaries produce more industry, intelligence, attention, and honesty in the fulfilling of their public duties, amongst all ranks in public employments.

That economy in public expenditure takes away the greatest part of the temptation to bribery and corruption, which ought to be a principal consideration with a free people.

Opinions on Various Subjects by William Machere.

Watson, Printer, 15, City Road.

A LECTURE
ON
CONSISTENCY.

BY ROBERT DALE OWEN.

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LECTURE ON CONSISTENCY.

As we gradually awake from the unconscious sleep of infancy, to a perception of the appearances and occurrences of this busy earth, we find ourselves existing in a world of multiform scenes and of varied interest. And as our senses throw off the lethargy that envelopes their infant growth, so does the horizon of our observation expand. Every day brings new objects to our curious view, and every hour adds another item to the sum of our experience. We approach our finger to the dazzling candle, and we learn that its bright flame burns. Gradually we discover the sources of pleasure, and the causes of pain. We are taught that exercise braces our nerves, and that temperance establishes our health; that idleness destroys the mind, and excess the body. We feel the placid influence of kindly emotions, and we see the blighting influence of ungoverned passions. Amid the conflicting phenomena of human life—in each passing event, and under every change that comes over us—we seek happiness; sometimes, when experience has been our teacher, to find it; sometimes, alas! at the bidding of imagination, to find it not.

There is in man, and in youth especially, a restless spirit of curiosity; an unsatisfied thirst after novelty; an irrepressible desire to see, to hear, to feel, to know—to discover whatever is hidden, and to approach whatever is distant. Its movements first start us in the path of knowledge; and its gratification is our reward, as we proceed.

Much has this spirit of inquiry done for man. Without it he would be but as a passive mass, scarcely roused to exertion but by the immediate pressure of his wants; and, these satisfied, ready to sink back again into uninterested listlessness. That stirring spirit whets his senses, quickens his perceptions, spurs his industry, nerves his enterprise, and strengthens his perseverance. It leads him through every clime, into every country: to the mountain summit, where snows are eternal, and across the arid desert, where life is extinct

It would fain lead him beyond the mountain and the desert ; ay ! even in despite of his limited senses, beyond our earth and her phenomena. But it is hard to pass the limits of knowledge which these senses prescribe.

We can, indeed, watch the balloon as it rises above the lofty summer cloud, and see it disappear in the blue ether. We can rise *with* that balloon, until we look down on the storm, and see the lightning springing beneath us. But to the earth from whence it had risen the floating ball returns, and brings back with it the travellers to their sublunary home.

We can look on the distant stars, or on the nearer moon ; but, even with the best aids which modern science supplies to our vision, how little do we see ! how little can we learn ! We can indeed discover that these stars and that moon exist. But if they be worlds with phenomena analogous to those that surround us here, for us, at least, their imagined phenomena have no existence. If living and moving beings inhabit these sparkling globes, for us they neither live, nor move, nor have a being. If we speak of these inhabitants, we speak of nonentities, in the attempt to describe which language becomes utterly insignificant. Few and imperfect, then, are the impressions we receive, uncertain and scanty the knowledge we acquire, of existences out of this world. Our own material earth, as we see it, and hear it, and feel it around us, is that portion of matter which alone distinctly exists to our human perceptions and human experience. On it we walk ; on it we live. The familiar phenomena that hourly strike our senses are of this world. The beings whose welfare claims our care, and whose fates arouse our sensibilities, are all of this material world alone.

Still, that restless, unsatisfied spirit of thirsty curiosity will not be confined, even to earth. It has passed to other regions ; and brought us back information true or false concerning them.

Men have said that there exists somewhere in space, far beyond the limits of man's vision, and without the sphere of man's perceptions, a certain—place, must I call it ? I know not. Our earthly language is but ill adapted to give names to spiritual residences. But, since we of the earth can speak the earth's language only, we will call it—a place, named heaven.

Even tradition ventures no conjecture as to the extent of this location, nor furnishes any distinct account of the particular phenomena it exhibits. I believe it is usually imagined to contain a stupendous throne, surrounded by bright clouds, and diffusing on all sides a light of exceeding brilliancy. In the space around this throne, myriads—I was about to say, of human beings ; but here again our mundane language is at fault. The existences which

are imagined around that throne of brightness, are *not* human beings. Many of them are indeed said to be the same which once lived and acted upon earth under that name, and are imagined to possess forms of surpassing beauty: but these forms are not of material figure or corporeal dimensions; they have, therefore, no material existence, and cannot, by the most ventured stretch of analogy, be termed human beings. But, whatever the name under which we choose to imagine them, myriads of existences are said to surround that throne. Each of these existences, we are told, retains a sense of identity with some individual man or woman who formerly lived on this earth. They have one occupation only. It is that of pronouncing praises and thanksgivings, and of executing songs and hymns, accompanying their voices on golden harps. Thus, we are informed, they shall exist throughout eternity.

Men have said also, that on this throne, whence the light proceeds which illuminates the space called heaven, an immaterial being has his residence. They tell us that to this omnipotent existence the thanksgivings and hymns of the inhabitants of heaven are addressed; as well in order to increase that being's glory, as because he is well pleased to receive such praise.

It is said that the occupation itself is to the immaterial spirits, who were formerly human beings, a source of unceasing enjoyment, infinite in degree and endless in duration. It is asserted, that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived," the unclouded and eternal felicity of that distant abode. All earthly enjoyments, we are told, are but as worthless vanity compared to the bliss of one moment thus spent in heaven.

But there is also another unearthly location of which, it is said, human beings have obtained some particulars. It is situated within view of heaven, wherever that may be; and is separated from the heavenly kingdom by a great gulf which is fixed between these two residences. It has been called hell, and is usually imagined to contain a lake of prodigious extent. This lake is on fire; it is filled with brimstone, which burns without ceasing, and emits a smoke as of a great furnace. It is said to contain, in its burning waters, millions on millions of wretched existences, a great proportion of whom were once human beings. These are tormented in the flame, and are not even allowed a drop of water to cool their tongues. They will continue throughout eternity to be so tormented; and, though changed in their nature no less than the inhabitants of heaven, they also retain a consciousness of their former state of existence upon earth.

Both heaven and hell, notwithstanding our indefinite conceptions of their form and extent, are, I believe, imagined to have

gates. We are told that the keys of the gates of hell are in the hands of the creator of the universe, and those of the gates of heaven in the hands of St. Peter, a man who was born about two thousand years ago. I presume that the inmates of both places are supposed to enter them through these gates.

Other particulars regarding heaven and hell I might add, on the authority of those who profess to be accurately informed ; but the accounts appear to me somewhat contradictory, and very indistinct. In what manner or at what time the bodies—or as some have it, the living principles—of those who die on earth, are supposed to be conveyed to their future abodes, I cannot clearly explain to you ; for the documents relating to this subject are not very explicit. It is, so far as I can learn, generally imagined, either that these bodies or living principles are conveyed thither immediately after death, or else lie asleep for some thousand years, until a day when the heavens shall be rolled together as a scroll, and the stars shall fall on the earth, like untimely figs cast from some fig-tree that is shaken of a mighty wind ; that then, on that day, these bodies or living principles shall be awoken from their long slumbers by the sounding of seven trumpets, and shall stand before the throne that is raised in the midst of heaven, to be judged from books in which have been regularly recorded for the last six thousand years all the actions of mankind, whether they have been good or whether they have been evil.

Many glowing pictures have been drawn of the joys of heaven, and many frightful descriptions given of the torments of hell. I can still recollect the vividness of perception which characterised my infant conceptions of both places—the thousand questions I used to ask about them, and the mingled sensations of delight and horror which the replies to my questions produced within me.

Mrs. Hemans has beautifully expressed, in the following lines, the vague ideas which a child first conceives of heaven, and the indefinite, but the enthusiastic and exciting answers, that are usually made to it.

“ I hear thee speak of the better land,
 Thou call'st its children a happy band ;
 Mother ! oh where is that radiant shore ?
 Shall we not seek it, and weep no more ?—
 Is it where the flower of the orange blows,
 And the fire-flies dance through myrtle boughs ?”
 —“ Not there, not there, my child !”

“ Is it where the feathery palm-trees rise,
 And the date grows ripe under sunny skies ?—

Or 'midst the green islands of glittering seas,
Where fragrant forests perfume the breeze?
And strange, bright birds, on their starry wings,
Bear the rich hues of all glorious things?"

—"Not there, not there, my child!"

"Is it far away, in some region old,
Where the rivers wander o'er sands of gold?—
Where the burning rays of the ruby shine,
And the diamond lights up the secret mine,
And the pearl gleams forth from the coral strand?
Is it there, sweet mother, that better land?"

—"Not there, not there, my child!"

"Eye hath not seen it, my gentle boy!
Ear hath not heard its deep sounds of joy;
Dreams cannot picture a world so fair;
Sorrow and death cannot enter there;
Time doth not breathe on its fadeless bloom,
For beyond the clouds and beyond the tomb,

—"It is there, it is there, my child!"

It is a less pleasing task to lay before you the descriptions which are presented to us of the region of endless misery. I select for that purpose the following from the pen of a much respected orthodox religionist, the Rev. Mr. Edwards, as given in his "Discourses on the Eternity of Hell Torments."

"Be entreated," says he, "to consider attentively how great and awful a thing eternity is. Although you cannot comprehend it the more by considering it, yet you may be made more sensible that it is not a thing to be disregarded. Do but consider what it is to suffer extreme pain for ever and ever; to suffer it day and night, from one day to another, from one year to another, from one age to another, from one thousand ages to another, and so adding age to age, and thousands to thousands, in pain, in wailing and lamenting, groaning and shrieking, and gnashing your teeth; with your souls full of dreadful grief and amazement, with your bodies and every member of them full of racking torture; without any possibility of getting ease; without any possibility of moving God to pity your cries; without any possibility of hiding yourselves from him; without any possibility of diverting your thoughts from your pain; without any possibility of obtaining any manner of mitigation, or help, or change for the better. How dismal will it be, when you are under these racking torments, to know assuredly that you never, never shall be delivered from them; to have no hope—when you shall wish that you might be turned into nothing, but shall have no hope of it; when you shall wish that you might be turned into a toad, or a serpent, but shall

have no hope of it ; when you shall rejoice if you might but have any relief, after you shall have endured these torments millions of ages, but shall have no hope of it when, after you have worn out the age of the sun, moon, and stars, in your dolorous groans and lamentations, without rest, day or night, or one minute's ease, yet you shall have no hope of being delivered ; when, after you have worn out a thousand more such ages, yet you shall have no hope, but shall know that you are not one whit nearer to the end of your torments ; that still there are the same groans, the same shrieks, the same doleful cries incessantly to be made by you, and that the smoke of your torment shall still ascend for ever and ever ; and that your souls, which shall have been agitated by the wrath of God all this while, shall still exist to bear more wrath ; your bodies, which shall have been burning all this time in these glowing flames, yet shall not have been consumed, but will remain through an eternity ; yet which shall not have been at all shortened by what shall have been past !”

I have thus endeavoured to furnish you with a sketch of the most commonly received opinions regarding heaven and hell ; an impartial sketch, so far as I can judge ; and though not very luminous nor definite, yet as much so, perhaps, as the nature of the subject—if indeed we can talk of the *nature* of that which is *supernatural*—as luminous, perhaps, and definite as the nature of such a subject and the character of human language permit.

But besides the sketch of the places themselves, we are furnished, by those who conceive themselves well-informed in such matters, with a statement of the means by which we, the present occupants of the earth, can become inhabitants of heaven, or inmates of hell.

The conditions of admission to these two places, it is said, are contained in a book called the Bible. The legally appointed expounders of that book inform us, that to obtain a place in heaven it is necessary to believe all that the Bible relates, to perform the spiritual exercises it dictates, and to obey the precepts it enjoins. They inform us also, that a failure to comply with these conditions will cause us to re-exist for ever in hell.

This is one side of the great—I may say, the engrossing question, of religion, and it is the side which has hitherto been taken up by a considerable portion of the civilized world.

Others, however, there are,—and the number is on the increase—who do not believe in the descriptions I have given you ; and who cannot see any reason to conclude, that a belief in the Bible, or the performance of any spiritual ceremonies whatever, can influence, alter, or in any way determine for us a future state of existence in unseen regions. On the contrary, they are of opinion, that while we remain here on earth, we can correctly

know and understand those things only which appertain to the earth, and can make no useful, practical discoveries out of our own planet.

Now, I am not about to discuss this question. It is not my present intention to inquire whether we can make and have made such superhuman discoveries, or whether we have not made and cannot make them.

But permit me earnestly to request your serious, undivided attention to the proposition I am about to state to you.

Either we HAVE information regarding these two residences, heaven and hell, or we HAVE NOT. This is as self-evident as any mathematical truism.

What follows? Either that we ought to occupy ourselves in ascertaining these terms of admission and in complying with them, or we ought not. It is of exceeding importance that we should well consider what this alternative involves.

And, first, let us inquire what proportion of our lives should be devoted to examine and fulfil these terms of admission, *on the supposition* that we can ascertain what they are. To discover this it may be expedient that we seek to understand, if we can, what eternity means, seeing that the state of being in question is said to be eternal.

It has been calculated that the distance from hence to the sun is nearly one hundred millions of miles; and the distance to Sirius, the nearest of the fixed stars, more than five hundred thousand times greater. The distance to the more remote among the fixed stars has never been calculated. But conceive, if it be possible, how immense the distance from our earth to the remotest star that telescope ever aided us to discover. Then imagine a circle drawn at that inconceivable distance all round our earth, and suppose a globe of sand of such stupendous dimensions that its circumference should fill up that mighty circle. Imagine each grain of that sand one million times less than the smallest animalcule which microscope ever made visible. How utterly beyond the power of imagination must be the number of these grains that should go to make up the whole enormous mass! And now imagine that one of these imperceptible grains were detached from that mass at the close of each million of centuries. How long, think you, would it require ere the whole immeasurable globe was thus dissolved, grain by grain? Do not your human senses refuse even to imagine the period? Do you not feel that you are approaching a region of imagination that belongs not to man? If I asked you how many moments that period may contain, might I not seem to ask it in derision?

And yet each single moment it contains is millions on millions of times longer, compared to the period itself, than is the period

compared to eternity. Let such a globe be formed, and thus lessen by one grain each million of centuries, until, grain by grain, it pass away. Let another of equal dimensions replace it, in like manner to lessen and to disappear. Then another, and another, until thousands have been added to thousands, and millions to millions, in the stupendous succession. Then take the sum of these immeasurable periods, and deduct it from eternity.

Have you obtained a tenth, a thousandth, a millionth part? Have you obtained the smallest expressible fraction? Have ye shortened eternity even by one fleeting instant? Would ye be, even by one single moment, nearer the end of eternity, if these unimagined periods were come and past, than you are at this day?

Now, it is this period of eternity which, we are told, is to be spent in heaven or hell. If terms of admission to both places have, in very truth, been tendered to us, our compliance or non-compliance with these terms shall affect our well-being *through this period of eternity*.

I recur, then, to my question, "What proportion of our time may reasonably be devoted to the fulfilment of these terms, if they have been so tendered? and what proportion to the remainder of our business?" In other words, "How much of each day or week should be employed for heaven, and how much for earth?"

How much? Suppose you had two bags, one containing a cent, and the other a million of dollars: what proportion of your time might be reasonably devoted to the care of the cent, and what proportion to that of the million of dollars? Would ye spend for that paltry cent *six* days out of the seven, or *one* day out of the seven, or one hour of a single day? You would not; you know too well the relative value of moneys.

Have ye ever accurately calculated the relative value of a life one hundred years long, and a life throughout eternity? If you have, and if you sincerely believe in orthodox supernaturals, you have come to the conclusion that one minute per week is incalculably too much to spend for this world, and six days, twenty-three hours, and fifty-nine minutes per week too little to spend for the next.

Observe, then, I pray you, what this question about unseen regions involves. Not the occupation of one day in seven, but of **YOUR LIVES**. Not the rational direction of a portion of your money, a portion of your talents, a portion of your influence, but of **ALL**. This the most orthodox and zealous among religious ministers themselves openly declare.

Allow me to repeat the alternative to which I have already called your attention. Either we *can* know nothing of heaven, and can gain admittance to it by our own exertions, or we *can not*.

Do we know it, and can we gain admission? Then ought the world to be one vast temple; its occupation one great religious ceremony; its desires one engrossing wish for eternal happiness.

Do we know nothing either of the place itself, or of the means whereby we may reach it? Then has blood been shed, and treasure expended, and precious time consumed—for a dream. Then are we paying yearly twenty millions—for a dream. Then is good temper forfeited, good fellowship marred, union broken, kindness destroyed, honesty persecuted, and hypocrisy extolled, all—all—for a dream.

I speak not now as the advocate, nor as the opponent, either of religion or of scepticism; I speak but in favour of consistency.

Tell me not that nature is too weak to mortify even its strongest desires at the voice of religion. Have ye never heard of the Indian Fakir? never read of those martyr devotees who, with a consistency that might shame the lukewarm religionist of Christendom, will endure to be swung for years in that torrid clime before a slow fire—who will crawl, on hands and knees, around a mighty empire; or roll their naked bodies in the dust, over hill and plain, across from the shores of the Indus to the banks of the sacred Ganges—who will continue for life in one unnatural, unvaried posture, till they lose all power to change it; or swing, suspended by human flesh-hooks, until crucified nature sinks under the infliction? Powerful and enduring, even in his follies, is man! Wherefore should we deem a life spent in religious exercises and pious penances impossible to him?

I speak, then, in favour of consistency. I would have him who professes religion to be religious, not in word only, but in daily practice. I would have him consider what religion is, what it requires of him, and whether he conforms to its requisitions. I would have him conform to them, be they what they may. I would have men to be what they say they are. I would have them draw the line at once, boldly, distinctly; I would have them take sides, courageously, consistently.

If servants of God there be upon earth, ministers promoted by his nominations to the offices they hold, guides appointed by him to light us, with the gospel lamp, on the way to heaven—if such favoured mortals there be, with genuine credentials from the Almighty, I would have them act like the Almighty's servants. Why permit us to insult their Master by tendering to him a seventh only of our time, twenty millions only of our property, and devoting the rest to the service of Mammon? Let them claim, as they ought to claim, the sovereignty of the land. Let the Christian party in politics be, in their hands, the Aaron's rod, swallowing up all the rest. Let them set aside worldly constitutions, temporal laws, secular governors; and let them stand for-

ward, bold in the strength of their holy mission, to engage, in its support, every hand and every heart throughout the land. Theirs should be our property, for God's use; theirs our time, for God's service; theirs our talents, in God's cause; theirs our obedience, according to God's command. Let them establish their saintly rule over land and sea, forest and mountain, even to earth's remotest confines. They have spoken of church and state; let them speak of the church alone. She it is that should command our submission and dictate our rights; because she only can secure our everlasting happiness. Once, in the zenith of her power—in those days when England's proud Henry knelt before Becket's tomb, and bared his body to the ecclesiastical scourge—in those pious days the wealth that flowed into her coffers outweighed the treasures of kings, and the reverence she obtained for her priestly decrees was beyond the reverence paid to the mightiest of the earth. Let her servants again claim all, and more than all, they ever then possessed. If they be what they profess to be, and what we permit them to call themselves—the elected of God—it is theirs of right; it is all theirs, most justly, most consistently. If they save one soul—one only soul—from the undying torments of hell, they have produced more of happiness to the human race—millions of times told, than the riches of this earth can repay, or the power of all her potentates confer. In gratitude, then, no less than in justice, earth's treasures and powers should be theirs alone.

Will ye tell me that those who men call reverend are not the servants of God? that an Immaterial Spirit never adopted them to be his confidants—never disclosed to them the secrets of his government—never appointed them the expounders of his laws, and the apologists of his conduct? Will ye tell me that mortals cannot find out the doings of any unseen, unsearchable spirit? that human knowledge cannot extend beyond “the bourn from whence no traveller returns,” to paint to us, brightly or darkly, a future, eternal destiny? Will ye tell me all this?

And what of your country, if ye speak truth? What of the clerical influence that pervades, and the religious fear that rules it? What of persecutings for scepticism and heartburnings for heterodoxy? Is that influence, that fear, are those persecutings, those heartburnings, all uncalled for?—all uncaused, save by imagination alone? But what of all the sights and sounds that fill your city on this, the first day of the week?—the measured toll that calls to the house of worship; the gaily-decked throng that answers to the call; the stately edifice that opens to receive them; the silken-cloaked orator that ascends the consecrated pulpit; the prayers he offers up, the doctrines he expounds, the reverence he awakens, the salary he receives? What shall we

say of all these? Does the church-going bell but sound to proclaim the credulity of man? is the gay throng decked out only to assist at idol-worship? are those stately edifices all reared to imagination? and these fluent orators, are they but the teachers of idle illusion, and the receivers of thousands a year for the inculcation of vanities? What of our mammoth tract-house, with its steam-presses and its thousand hands? Is it all but the stereotyping of fables? the waste of public money? the abuse of public confidence? Will ye tell me all this?

There are those who begin to whisper such heresy very uncere- moniously, very audibly. If they speak truth, my friends, alas for the credulity, or, yet more, for the supineness, of our country! When will she awake to distinguish the mental fetters that are forged on her children's minds? when assume courage to shake off the system that sits, like an incubus, on the best efforts of her genius? when see fit to arrest the increase of those spiri- tual locusts, that swarm in clouds throughout our Christian land, shutting out the free light of heaven even while they devour the fair produce of earth?

Again let me remind you, that I speak not now as asserting, save hypothetically. I do but say, that religion is all or nothing; either that which deserves the devotion of our lives, or that which merits not a moment's consideration; that the clergy are either the heavenly-appointed servants of God, or the self-constituted deceivers of mankind. If God's servants, then, entitled to do- minion on the earth beneath, and honour even in heaven above; if deceivers, then—be they honest or dishonest—still idle con- sumers of unearned wealth, and salaried opponents of truth and knowledge.

Observe, that I do but remind you that there is no consistent halting between two opinions; no conscientious serving of two masters; no compounding between faith and scepticism. We know that the throne of God exists above the clouds—or we know it not; we have discovered the conditions under which we may obtain a place among the myriads around that throne—or we have not discovered them. We are religionists, or we are sceptics.

Were I a religionist—did I truly, firmly, *consistently* believe, as millions say they do, that the knowledge and the practice of religion in this life influences destiny in another—the spirit of truth be my witness, religion should be to me *every thing*. I would cast aside earthly enjoyments as dross, earthly cares as follies, and earthly thoughts and feelings as less than vanity. Religion should be my first waking thought, and my last image when sleep sunk me in unconsciousness. I would labour in her cause alone. I would not labour for the meat that perisheth, nor for treasure on earth, where moth and rust corrupt,

and thieves break through to steal; but only for a crown of glory in heavenly regions, where treasures and happiness are alike beyond the reach of time and chance. I would take thought for the morrow of eternity alone. I would esteem one soul gained to heaven worth a life of torture. There should be neither worldly prudence nor calculating circumspection in my engrossing zeal. Earthly consequences should never stay my hand nor seal my lips. I would speak to the imagination, awaken the feelings, stir up the passions, arouse the fancy. I would kindle the hot enthusiasm of youth, till it blazed with holy fervour, consuming by its scorching influence all human feelings, and human reserves, and human interests; and if reason melted away before the burning power, and the convulsions of conversion were succeeded by the ravings of insanity, that should not, for a moment, arrest my course. Believing that it is better to enter into life insane, than, having the soundest reason, to be cast into hell-fire, in a world changed to one great lunatic asylum I would see but the nursery of heaven. Earth, the mortals it contains, its joys and its griefs, should occupy no moment of my thoughts. The society of those I loved as my own soul should be to me valueless and vain, and the dearest pledges of their friendship worthless as a passing shadow; for these are but the affairs of a portion of eternity so small, that no human language can express its infinite littleness.

I would strive to look but on eternity and on the immortal souls around me, soon to be everlastingly tortured or everlastingly happy. I would deem all who thought of this world—who sought to increase mere temporal happiness, who laboured to obtain temporal goods, who bestowed even a passing thought on the purest, dearest of temporal pleasures—I would deem all such poor madmen. I would go forth to the world and preach to it, in season and out of season; and my text should be: "*What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*"

As a sceptic, my feelings and practices would be the reverse of all this. Doubting the accuracy of all predictions regarding our fate beyond the grave; convinced that we do not yet know, and utterly sceptical as to whether we ever shall know, any thing about it; perceiving not how we can influence our situation in any other world by any belief or religious exercises in this,—I would take a warm interest in the temporal happiness of mankind. I would consider the improvement of man's condition and the increase of his enjoyments here, as objects *in themselves* worthy the best exertions of the philosopher and the philanthropist. It should satisfy me if I felt myself useful to my fellow-creatures, and at peace with myself. I would labour for food, even though it

perisheth, and for raiment, even though the lilies of the field neither toil nor spin. I would not imitate the fowls of the air who sow not, nor reap, nor gather into barns. I would take thought for the necessaries and comforts of life; because I should distrust the promise that a Being who feeds the sparrows of heaven and clothes the lilies of the valley, will feed and clothe me also if I but live in faith, and neglect all to follow his kingdom. I would test the virtue and vice of actions, not by their imagined efficacy in procuring salvation hereafter, but by their present evident daily effects on the minds and bodies of my fellow-creatures. That which injures the mind or the body, or which disturbs the tranquillity of the heart, I should judge to be wrong, whether the sacred, books of the Jew or the Christian, the Mahometan or the Hindoo confirmed or condemned the judgment. That which brings calm enjoyment to the senses, and peace to the bosom, I should decide to be right, without first waiting to inquire if the name of Jehovah, or of Allah, or of Bramah, or any other name, had been employed to sanction or to denounce the decision. For me there should exist no artificial authoritative standard. I would imagine no after-reckoning beyond the grave, to falsify or confuse my temporal calculations. To the earth and its inhabitants my duties should be confined. With them I would associate, their plans I would discuss, their wishes and feelings I would endeavour to ascertain. But for spirits of the air, I would address them neither in public nor in private; nor would I ever discuss their plans or imagine their pleasure. To improve the earthly condition of my fellow-beings, to merit their esteem, and to obtain their affection, should be the extent of my ambition. I would look to the happiness I enjoyed in such a condition as to the end of my being on this side the grave; and for a future eternal destiny, I would take no thought for it; because, however engrossingly it would occupy my time and talents, if I could know and modify it, I should not perceive the utility of endeavouring to remove a veil beyond which all is darkness, or to influence an unknown destiny which is in other hands than mine.

In either case, as religionist or as sceptic, I should be consistent. I would not profess one thing and practise another—nor speak of spiritualities with my lips, while my heart was far from them. What I called myself, that I would be. St. John should never accuse me, as he did the church of Laodicea, that I was neither cold nor hot. The thoughtless alone, or the hypocrite, is lukewarm; and it ever has been and ever should be the endeavour of each honest man to avoid equally thoughtlessness and hypocrisy.

Such be our endeavour, my friends! Freely let us inquire, patiently examine, honestly judge, and consistently stand to our

judgment. Let no man find reason to accuse us of negligence or indecision. Let no man find cause to say, that, whether in enlightened truth or in honest error, we are not conscientiously consistent.

Let our rights know no bounds but the equally inviolable rights of our fellows. Within these just and peaceful limits, let us dare all things. While there is no doctrine so extravagant that we treat its expression with contempt, let there be none so sacred that we approach its examination with apprehension.

Let us draw the veil from before those things which men call holy. Truth can bear the light, and error must learn to bear it. Let us look *within* the veil. They say that the words of Omniscience are recorded there. They tell us that man's life and death are there both placed before him. Thither they direct us for a divine rule of life; thither for an infallible standard of right and wrong; thither for the decrees of unerring truth and the statutes of omniscient wisdom. Let us enter, then, even to the holiest of holies. By the light of reason let us read; it is our privilege as sentient beings. Mysteries that are illegible by that light were never made for man. That which it concerns men to believe, concerns them first to know and understand. Useful truth needs not the aid of mystery, and useless error ought not to obtain it.

Free be our inquiries, then, and zealous as free. Let us not rest satisfied until we have sought and found our rule of life—in religious precepts and spiritual decrees, if reason discover it there—in earthly deeds of kindness, and human principles of justice, if these be the more fitting rule for beings of earthly origin and human organization.

Among those who agree in spirit, let not words become a source of dissension. If works of gentle mercy and acts of unspotted integrity must needs be called religion, religion let them be called. The heartless and the dishonourable will then be the only infidel.

And, among those who *disagree*, not in word alone, but in very deed, let there still be charity to others' opinions, and **CONSISTENCY** to their own.

GALILEO AND THE INQUISITION.

EFFECTS

OF

MISSIONARY LABOURS.

BY ROBERT DALE OWEN.

LONDON:
J. WATSON, 15, CITY ROAD, FINSBURY

1841.

GALILEO AND THE INQUISITION.

I AM not at all surprised that the Florentine inquisitors imprisoned Galileo, and forced him to recant and disavow his astronomical heresies. I rather wonder how any one who reverences the Bible, be he Jew or Christian, can tolerate modern astronomy.

So long as the earth was a stationary plain, and the firmament a transparent reservoir, whose crystal gates could be opened to drown the human race; while our world was the universe, and the planets and stars only sparkling, accessory ornaments, hung in the blue vault to please the children of Adam; so long was there a locality for heaven above, and for hell beneath. Above the firmament and the starry host was infinite, empty space. There stood God's throne, and thence proceeded God's thunders. Moses and his contemporaries had no idea of globes rolling through space; so that in fixing the throne of the Deity above the stars, they never imagined that it might stand in the way of some planet in its annual revolution, or of some comet in its eccentric orbit.

In like manner, below this earthly plain, through which of course the sun's rays could not penetrate, there was easily to be conceived a region of darkness and misery, the entrance by some bottomless pit, into which lost souls were thrown.

But what said the Italian astronomer? The earth is not flat, but round. The stars are suns and worlds. Our world is but a speck in the universe. The sun does not revolve round our earth; but our earth revolves round the sun. If we point upwards to heaven at one moment, and again point upwards a few hours afterwards, we are pointing in two opposite directions. It might have been difficult for the inquisitors to prove the falsehood of all this, but there was no difficulty at all in proving its heterodoxy; that is to say, its inconsistency with the Scriptures.

We are very apt, now-a-days, to slur over our astronomical difficulties; and since the facts are proved, to hold that they are not heterodox. The priests of the seventeenth century were more consistent. They told Galileo that his theory was heretical and unscriptural; and so it was; and so, but for our prejudices, should we all see it to be.

Let us imagine Galileo before the Holy Tribunal of Florence, seeing confinement or death before him, and interrogated by the inquisitors.

Inquisitor. All Florence rings with your heresies, Signor Galileo.

Galileo. I am no heretic, so please your holy reverences, but an humble disciple of science.

Inquisitor. 'Tis not the first time that science has played the heretic; nor, if we tolerate impiety like yours, will it be the last.

Galileo. I crave your patience, reverend fathers. God is my witness that I have never strayed beyond the boundaries of my own favourite studies, nor ever meddled with our religion and her holy mysteries.

Inquisitor. The open enemy were less dangerous than the secret foe.

Galileo. I pray your reverence to explain.

Inquisitor. Needs it explanation? Needs it to repeat all the blasphemies you have uttered regarding this world which the Son of God came down to save, and the sun and the stars which God set in the firmament?

Galileo. Blasphemies!

Inquisitor. Ay, blasphemies—and uttered publicly and shamelessly too. But, Santa Maria! it shall be suffered no longer.

Galileo. I know not of what blasphemies you speak, holy father.

Inquisitor. You know not? Have you not taught that the earth is a globe, and revolves on its axis, and around the sun?

Galileo. I have.

Inquisitor. And yet you ask what blasphemy I spoke of? Does the word of the Most High tell us aught of this?

Galileo. But it denies it not.

Inquisitor. Did Moses, the sacred historian, believe it?

Galileo. I know not. I would not judge holy questions.

Inquisitor. Your modesty is assumed too late, Signor Galileo. It shall avail you nothing. Does not Moses tell us, that God in the beginning created the earth?

Galileo. He does.

Inquisitor. That the creation of the earth and its trees and its plants and its living creatures, employed the Deity five days? and that in one day he made the sun and the moon and all the stars, and set them in the firmament above the earth?

Galileo. He does.

Inquisitor. That the sun and moon and all the stars were set there expressly to light the earth?

Galileo. Does he say so?

Inquisitor. And you deny it.

Galileo. Nay, holy father, I have never said 'twas not so.

Inquisitor. Ay! but your system says it. Men are fools, 'tis true; yet are there reasoning knaves among them. They cannot believe both Moses and Galileo.

Galileo. I perceive not the discrepancy.

Inquisitor. You are wondrous short-sighted, Signor Astronomer. Must I repeat the heresy? and oppose the inspired of God to the professor of Pisa? Thus, then, Moses speaks of the world as of the especial object of God's care, the especial work of his hand; that to which all else in the universe was tributary; that for which God made the sun that it might light it by

day, and the moon and stars that they might shine on it by night : Moses says this world was created by God in *five* days, and the rest of the universe in *one* day, thus making the earth the first and great object in creation, and all else but accessory and unimportant. What says Galileo ? He tells us that this world is but a speck, a grain of sand in God's universe, one planet of one system, while millions of similar systems exist around us, each planet in the least of which claimed the divine care, in creation and preservation, equally with ours. Shall we be told that God gave one day only to the creation of the unconceivable mass, and five to the creation of the grain of sand ? that the millions of worlds were given solely to spangle and ornament the nights of one little planet among those millions ? Yet Moses says so. And Moses speaks truth. Galileo, therefore, is a liar and a heretic. This world is the centre of the universe. All other heavenly bodies revolve around it, at God's command, to light and to heat and to adorn it. For our earth they were made, on the fourth day of creation ; and for us they perform their daily journeys. Thus said Moses, thus says our holy church, and thus say all true believers.

Galileo. Yet Moses says not that the earth is stationary, and that the sun and stars revolve around it.

Inquisitor. This is child's play, signor ; unbecoming your gravity, and unbecoming mine. If Moses says it not in these very terms, is it not implied ?—expressly implied, in the whole history of creation, almost in every page of the sacred volume ? Is not the firmament placed above the earth, and are not all the stars set in the firmament ? Is not the firmament called heaven ? and have not holy men in all ages looked up when they would look to God ? Is not the heaven God's throne, and the earth his footstool ? How then shall the earth be a globe always in motion ? Does our world carry heaven along with her, at the rate of one thousand miles a minute ? Or if not, how shall heaven remain above us ? And if not above us, why does Moses say, " God came down from heaven to see the tower which the children of men builded ? " and why was Elijah carried upwards in a whirlwind ? and why did Jesus Christ ascend, when he would go to his Father ? You would pervert our whole faith, signor. You would annihilate heaven and hell ; for where is there room for either in that space which is filled by millions on millions of systems ? You would deny to the Almighty his residence, whence he looks down on the inhabitants of this prostrate world ; for how shall any being look on the whole surface of a globe at once ? Or how shall we imagine the Deity following the earth in her orbit, to see whether faith or wickedness prevail around her ? this is but atheism.

Galileo. Jesu defend me from the imputation !

Inquisitor. Abjure your system, then. When God tells us that the sun stood still upon Gibeon, at the command of his servant Joshua, let not Galileo tell us, that the sun does not move, and

therefore could not obey Joshua's command. This is but a fighting against God; a mockery of his word. It is to tell us that the inspired penmen were deceived or deceivers. It is blasphemy, clothed in the robes of science. Abjure! abjure!

Galileo. I pray you, holy signors, to examine the proofs of what I have taught.

Inquisitor. Proofs! proofs against God! proofs to show that Galileo is wiser than his Maker! that a mortal can disclose to us secrets which the great Architect himself could not reveal! Away with him, guards, to his dungeon! (*Galileo is led off.*)

Second Inquisitor. 'Tis a daring heretic.

First Inquisitor. Ay! and a dangerous.

Second Inquisitor. Marked you the suppressed curl of his lip as you spoke of Moses and his astronomy?

First Inquisitor. Do you ask? I were unworthy else to fill this chair. I can read hearts in faces; and that's a stubborn one.

Second Inquisitor. But we can break or bend it, an 'twere a heart of steel.

First Inquisitor. See to it, brother—Yet stay! he is a favourite with the Florentines.

Second Inquisitor. I marvel not. He has that about him which will command attention and win respect. And his theory is seducing.

First Inquisitor. It must not spread. It strikes at the very root of the church's faith. The Copernican system and the Bible cannot stand together. The discrepancy is too gross. Men, fools as they are, cannot help but see it.

Second Inquisitor. Yet are they wondrous blind.

First Inquisitor. But we must not tempt them too far. If they begin to question and to doubt—

Second Inquisitor. I know not. I am the last to recommend toleration to so heretical a theory as this of Galileo. Yet, if it must be so—if we must yield to the presumptuous spirit of the times thus far—

First Inquisitor. But the risk, brother—the risk. We can put him down; we can destroy him and his theory; why then leave the hydra, merely because we think ourselves an overmatch for him? If there were no alternative, then were I the last to despair of the result. If we could no longer deny the truth of this upstart system, we would boldly deny its heresy. We would call it—ay, and men should believe it—only a confirmation of all that Moses has written and the church has taught. Where we cannot break, we must bend; where we cannot deny, we must explain away; where we cannot destroy, we must win over. But let us break and deny and destroy while we can. The other is but a ventured game, and a hazardous. To the work, then. Let us annihilate the enemy while we may. If we fail, let us adopt him, and teach him to fight the church's battles.

Second Inquisitor. Amen.

LAWRENCE AND GALILEO.

[The following article was published in the (London) Monthly Magazine, about the time when William Lawrence, the bold and fearless materialist, and one of the most eminent surgeons and physiologists of Great Britain, being suspended, for the heresy of his opinions, from the office by which he obtained his living, was induced, like the persecuted Galileo, to sign a recantation of the truths he had once so ably propounded.]

From the Monthly Magazine.

"When in our last we signalized the success of Mr. Lawrence,* we had no suspicion that this worthy gentleman had been seduced to publish the following extraordinary paper, a few days before the election. In now giving it place as a document worthy of being preserved, and which, in after ages, will mark the year 1822, and characterize the age of George the Fourth, we have judged it proper to annex, in parallel columns, the never-to-be-forgotten abjuration of Galileo. Every reader of the two papers will, by his own comments, relieve us from the responsibility of making such as the circumstances deserve:

MR. LAWRENCE'S RETRACTATION.

College of Physicians,
April 16, 1822.

DEAR SIR—The renewed publication by others, over whom I have no control, of the work which I suppressed three years ago, induces me to offer a few observations on the subject, and to present them, through you, to the governors of Bridewell and Bethlem. The motives and circumstances of the suppression in question, are detailed in a letter to Mr. Harrison, through whose medium it was communicated to the gover-

THE ABJURATION OF GALILEO.

I, GALILEO GALILEI, son of the late Vincent Galileo, a Florentine, at the age of seventy, appearing personally in judgment, and being on my knees in the presence of you, most eminent and most reverend lords cardinal of the universal Christian commonwealth, inquisitors general against heretical depravity, having before my eyes the holy gospels, on which I now lay my hands, swear that I have always believed, and now believe, and God helping, that I shall for the future always believe what-

* In his election as surgeon of the Royal College of Physicians.

nors of the two hospitals; and this letter, I conclude, is entered on the minutes of their proceedings.

Further experience and reflection have only tended to convince me more strongly that the publication of certain passages in these writings was *highly improper*; to increase my *regret* at having sent them forth to the world; to make me satisfied with the measure of withdrawing them from public circulation; and consequently firmly resolved, not only never to reprint them, but also *never to publish any thing more on similar subjects*.

Fully impressed with these sentiments, I hoped and concluded that my lectures would in future be regarded only as professional writings, and be referred to merely by medical readers. The copies which have gone out of my possession, from the time when the sale was discontinued to the late decision of the lord chancellor, which has enabled all who may choose to print and publish my lectures, have therefore been granted only as matter of favour in individual instances to professional men, particularly foreigners, or to scientific and literary characters. My expectations have been disappointed by the piratical act of a bookseller in the Strand, named Smith. When his reprint of my lectures was announced, I adopted the only measure which could enable me to continue the suppression of the work, namely, an application to the court of chancery for an injunction against this person, being encouraged by

ever the holy catholic and apostolic Roman church holds, preaches, and teaches. But because this holy office had enjoined me by precept, entirely to relinquish the false dogma which maintains that the sun is the centre of the world, and immoveable, and that the earth is not the centre, and moves; not to hold, defend, or teach by any means, or by writing, the aforesaid false doctrine; and after it had been notified to me, that the aforesaid doctrine is repugnant to the Holy Scripture, I have written and printed a book, in which I treat of the same doctrine already condemned, and adduce reasons with great efficacy, in favour of it, not offering any solution of them; therefore I have been adjudged and vehemently suspected of heresy; namely, that I maintained and believed that the sun is the centre of the world, and immoveable, and that the earth is not the centre, and moves. Therefore, being willing to take out of the minds of your eminencies, and of every catholic Christian, this vehement suspicion of right conceived against me, I, with sincere heart, and faith unfeigned, abjure, execrate, and detest, the above said errors and heresies, and generally every other error and sect contrary to the above said holy church; and I swear that I will never any more hereafter say or assert, by speech or writing, any thing through which the like suspicion may be had of me; but, if I shall know any one heretical, or suspected of heresy, I will denounce him to this

the decided favourable opinions of the two eminent counsel before whom the case was laid.

The course of argument adopted by these gentlemen, in the proceedings which ensued, was that which they deemed best calculated to attain my object—the permanent suppression of the book. It is not to be regarded as a renewed statement, or defence, on my part, of opinions which I had already withdrawn from the public, and the continued suppression of which, in conformity to my previous arrangement, was my only motive for incurring the trouble and expense of a chancery suit.

As to the charge of *irreligion*, again hinted at in the court of chancery, I beg to repeat what I have already expressed in my letter before alluded to—that I am fully impressed with the importance of religion and morality to the welfare of mankind—that *I am most sensible of the distinguishing excellences of that pure religion which is unfolded in the New Testament*; and most earnestly desirous to see its pure spirit universally diffused and acted on.

W. LAWRENCE.

R. C. Glynn, Bt., President of Bridewell and Bethlem, &c.

holy office, or to the inquisitor and ordinary of the place in which I shall be. I moreover swear and promise that I will fulfil and observe entirely all the penitences which have been imposed upon me, or which shall be imposed by this holy office. But if it shall happen that I shall go contrary (which God avert,) to any of my words, promises, protestations, and oaths, I subject myself to all the penalties and punishments which, by the holy canons, and other constitutions, general and particular, have been enacted and promulgated against such delinquents. So help me God, and his holy gospels, on which I now lay my hands.

I, the aforesaid Galileo Galilei, have abjured, sworn, promised, and have bound myself as above, and in the fidelity of those with my own hands, and have subscribed to this present writing of my abjuration, which I have recited word by word. At Rome, in the convent of Minerva, this 22nd of June, of the year 1633.

I, Galileo Galilei, have abjured as above, with my own hand.

EFFECTS OF MISSIONARY LABOURS:

[* * * In this credulous age, whose very benevolence is whimsical—when men subscribe thousands of pounds to send theological students to Central Africa and farthest India, and think they are thus doing their fellow-men a kindness, and their God a service; it is worthy of earnest and serious inquiry, whether money and exertions which are so much wanted to correct the crying vices and relieve the hopeless misery that surround us at home, are not worse than lost abroad.

If the following article serve to awaken in the minds of those who have conscientiously supported what they thought to be the cause of Deity, a desire to examine farther into the actual effects which missions too often produce, the object for which it has been issued will be obtained.

R. D. O.]

WHEN infidels, as they are called, relate to us the adventures of religious missionaries, and speak of the effects produced by missionary exertions, we may, without imputing any dishonest motive, suppose exaggeration or inaccuracy; upon the same principle that even a sincere and conscientious believer seldom speaks of a sceptic without misrepresenting his motive, and misjudging his conduct. Now, though it be true, that the very principles of a reasoning and consistent infidel teach him practical justice and tolerance and impartiality, yet do the effects of false principles and prejudiced habits often remain, after the principles themselves are disowned as baseless, and the habits condemned as vicious. A man may thus lose his religion without losing many a habit and propensity which thence derived its origin. Besides all this, we must recollect, that man, as he is now trained, is a being of prepossessions and of extremes. He frequently mistakes the reverse of wrong for right; he often views the actions of those whose opinions differ from his, through a partial medium; and, thus viewing them, his sincerest impressions are, at times, prejudiced and false.

Thus, it is not to the narrations of the missionary's opponents

that we may trust implicitly for an impartial view of his labours, and their effects. But surely the missionary's own word may be taken against himself. Out of his own mouth he may be condemned, without fear of false testimony. Let M. Dobrizhoffer, then, tell us the particulars and the result of a missionary excursion which he made into the Guarany country, and let us observe his reflections, and make our own. The narrative is from the "History of the Abipones," an aboriginal nation of South America.

"I shall here record another excursion to the savages, which, though completed in less time than the former, was productive of more advantage. A company of Spaniards were employed in preparing the herb of Paraguay, on the southern banks of the river Empalado. The trees from which these leaves were plucked falling, they commissioned three men to seek for the tree in request beyond the river. By accident they lit upon a hovel and a field of maize, from which they falsely conjectured that the wood was full of savage hordes. This occurrence affected them all with such fear, that, suspending the business upon which they were engaged, they kept within their huts, like snails in their shells, and spent day and night in dread of hostile aggression. To deliver them from this state of fear, a messenger was sent to St. Joachim, requiring us to search for the savages abiding there, and to remove them, when found, to our colony. I applied myself to the task without shrinking, and, on the day of St. John the Evangelist, commenced my travels, accompanied by forty Indians. Having taken a guide from the Spanish hut, and crossed the river Empalado, we carefully explored all the woods and the banks of the river Mondaymiri, and discovering at length, on the third day, a human footstep, we traced it to a little dwelling, where an old woman with her son and daughter, a youth and maiden of twenty and fifteen years of age, had lived many years. Being asked where the other Indians were to be found, the mother replied, that no mortal besides herself and her two children survived in these woods; that all the rest who had occupied this neighbourhood had died long ago of the small-pox. Perceiving me doubtful as to the correctness of her statement, the son observed, 'You may credit my mother in her assertion, without scruple; for I myself have traversed these woods far and near in search of a wife, but could never meet with a single human being.' Nature had taught the young savage that it was not lawful to marry his sister. I exhorted the old mother to migrate as fast as possible to my town, promising that both she and her children should be more comfortably situated. She declared herself willing to accept my invitation, to which there was only one objection. 'I have,' says she, 'three boars, which have been tamed from their earliest age. They follow us wherever we go, and I am afraid, if they are exposed to the sun in a dry plain, unshaded by trees, they will immediately perish.' 'Pray be no longer anxious on this account,' replied I; 'depend upon it, I shall treat these dear little

animals with due kindness. When the sun is hot, we will find shade wherever we are. Lakes, rivers, or marshes, will be always at hand to cool your favourites." Induced by these promises, she agreed to go with us. And setting out the next day, we reached the town in safety on the first of January. And now it will be proper to give a cursory account of the mother and her offspring. Their hut consisted of the branches of the palm-tree, their drink of muddy water. Fruits, antas, fawns, rabbits, and various birds, maize, and the roots of the *mandiò* tree, afforded them food; a cloth woven of the leaves of the *caraquatà*, their bed and clothing. They delighted in honey, which abounds in the hollow trees of the forest. The smoke of tobacco the old woman inhaled, night and day, through the reed, to which was affixed a little wooden vessel, like a pan. The son constantly chewed tobacco leaves reduced to powder. Shells sharpened at a stone, or split reeds, served them for knives. The youth, who catered for his mother and sister, carried in his belt two pieces of iron, the fragment of some old broken knife, about as broad and long as a man's thumb, inserted in a wooden handle, and bound round with wax and thread. With this instrument he used to fashion arrows with great elegance, make wooden gins to take antas, perforate trees which seemed likely to contain honey, and perform other things of this kind. There being no clay to make pots of, they had fed, all their lives, on roasted meat instead of boiled. The leaves of the herb of Paraguay they only steeped in cold water, having no vessel to boil it in. To show how scanty their household furniture was, mention must be made of their clothes. The youth wore a cloak of the thread of the *caraquatà*, reaching from his shoulders to his knees, his middle being girded with little cords, from which hung a gourd full of the tobacco dust which he chewed. A net of a coarser thread was the mother's bed by night and her only garment by day. The girl, in like manner, wore a short net by day, in which she slept at night. This appearing to me too transparent, I gave her a cotton towel to cover her effectually. The girl, folding up the linen cloth into many folds, placed it on her head to defend her from the heat of the sun, but at the desire of the Indians wrapped it round her. I made the youth, too, wear some linen wrappers, which in my journey I had worn round my head as a defence against the gnats. Before this, he had climbed the highest trees like a monkey, to pluck from thence food for his pigs; but his bandages impeded him like fetters, so that he could scarcely move a step. In such extreme need, in such penury, I found them, experiencing the rigours of ancient anchorites, without discontent, vexation, or disease.

"My three wood Indians wore their hair dishevelled, cropped, and without a bandage. The youth neither had his lip perforated, nor his head crowned with parrot feathers. The mother and daughter had no ear-rings, though the former wore round her neck a cord, from which depended a small, heavy piece of wood, of a pyramidal shape, so that by their mutual collision they made

a noise at every step. At first sight I asked the old woman whether she used this jingling necklace to frighten away the gnats; and I afterwards substituted a string of beautifully coloured glass-beads, in place of these wooden weights. The mother and son were tall and well-looking, but the daughter had so fair and elegant a countenance, that a poet would have taken her for one of the nymphs or dryads, and any European might safely call her beautiful. She united a becoming cheerfulness with great courtesy, and did not seem at all alarmed at our arrival, but the rather enlivened. She laughed heartily at *our* Guarany, and we, on the other hand, at *her's*. For as this insulated family had no intercourse with any but themselves, their language was most ridiculously corrupted. The youth had never seen a female except his mother and sister, nor any male but his father. The girl had seen no woman but her mother, nor any man but her brother; her father having been torn to pieces by a tiger before she was born. To gather the fruits that grew on the ground or on the trees, and wood for fuel, the dexterous girl ran over the forest, tangled as it was with underwood, reeds, and brambles, by which she had her feet wretchedly scratched. Not to go unattended, she commonly had a little parrot on her shoulder, and a small monkey on her arm, unterrified by the tigers that haunt that neighbourhood. The new proselytes were quickly clothed in the town, and served with the daily allowance of food before the rest. I also took care they should take frequent excursions to the neighbouring woods, to enjoy the shade and pleasant freshness of the trees, to which they had been accustomed. For we found by experience, that savages removed to towns often waste away from the change of food and air, and from the heat of the sun, which powerfully affects their frames, accustomed as they have been from infancy, to moist, cool, shady groves. The same was the fate of the mother, son, and daughter, in our town. A few weeks after their arrival they were afflicted with a universal heaviness and rheum, to which succeeded a pain in the eyes and ears, and, not long after, deafness. Lowness of spirits, and disgust to food, at length wasted their strength to such a degree that an incurable consumption followed. After languishing some months, the old mother, who had been properly instructed in the christian religion and baptized, delivered up her spirit, with a mind so calm, so acquiescent with the divine will, that I cannot doubt but that she entered into a blessed immortality. The girl, who had entered the town full of health and beauty, soon lost all resemblance to herself. Enfeebled, withering by degrees like a flower, her bones hardly holding together, she at length followed her mother to the grave, and, if I be not much deceived, to heaven. Her brother, still surviving, was attacked by the same malady that proved fatal to his mother and sister; but being of a stronger constitution, overcame it. The measles, which made great havoc in the town, left him so confirmed in health, that there seemed nothing to be feared in regard to him. He was of

a cheerful disposition, went to church regularly, learnt the doctrines of Christianity with diligence, was gentle and compliant to all, and in every thing discovered marks of future excellence. Nevertheless, to put his perseverance to the proof, I thought it best to delay his baptism a little. At this time an Indian Christian, a good man, and rich in land, who, at my orders, had received this catechumen into his house, came to me and said, 'My father, our wood Indian is in perfect health of body, but seems to have gone a little astray in mind: he makes no complaints, but says that sleep has deserted him, his mother and sister appearing to him every night in a vision, saying, in a friendly tone, "Suffer thyself, I pray thee, to be baptized; we shall return to take thee away, when thou dost not expect it." This vision, he says, takes away his sleep.' 'Tell him,' answered I, 'to be of good heart, for that the melancholy remembrance of his mother and sister, with whom he has lived all his life, is the probable cause of these dreams; and that they, as I think, are gone to heaven, and have nothing more to do with this world.' A few days after, the same Indian returns, giving the same account as before, and with confirmed suspicions respecting the fearful delirium of our new Christian. Suspecting there was something in it, I immediately hastened to his house, and found him sitting. On my inquiring how he felt himself, 'Well,' he replied, smiling, 'and entirely free from pain;' but added, that he got no sleep at night, owing to the appearance of his mother and sister, admonishing him to hasten his baptism, and threatening to take him away unexpectedly. He told me over and over again, with his usual unreservedness, that this prevented him from getting any rest. I thought it probable that this was a mere dream, and worthy, on that account, of neglect. Mindful, however, that dreams have often been divine admonitions and the oracles of God, as appears from Holy Writ, it seemed advisable, in a matter of such moment, to consult both the security and tranquillity of the catechumen. Being assured of his constancy, and of his acquaintance with the chief heads of religion by previous interrogatories, I soon after baptized him with the name of Lewis. This I did on the 23rd of June, the eve of St. John, about the hour of ten in the morning. On the evening of the same day, without a symptom of disease or apoplexy, he quietly expired.

"This event, a fact well known to the whole town, and which I am ready to attest on oath, astonished every one. I leave my reader to form his own opinion; but in my mind I could never deem the circumstance merely accidental. To the exceeding compassion of the Almighty I attribute it, that these three Indians were discovered by me in the unknown recesses of the woods; that they so promptly complied with my exhortations to enter my town, and embrace Christianity; and that they closed their lives after having received baptism. The remembrance of my expedition to the river Empalado, though attended with so many hardships and dangers, is still most grateful to my heart; inasmuch as

it proved highly fortunate to the three wood Indians, and advantageous to the Spaniards."

What a lesson have we here! and how strangely perverted by him who gives it! Is it not matter of marvel, that a man can paint such a scene of misery and death in which he was the chief actor, and then congratulate himself that he was so!

He found these Indians, he tells us, innocent and happy, "without discontent, vexation, or disease;" exposed, indeed, to hardships, but accustomed to these, and enduring them with cheerfulness. He removed them to his town; he clothed them decently, as he calls it; "but the bandages impeded them like fetters, so that they could scarcely move a step." He fed them daily: but they pined for their cool, shady forest. The old mother languished some months in an incurable consumption, and then expired. The poor girl, "who had entered the town full of health and beauty, soon lost all resemblance to herself; till withering by degrees like a flower," she too fell a victim to the spirit of proselytism. Her brother did not long survive the loss of those who had so long been all the world to him. The forms of his mother and sister haunted his slumbers, and called him from a life that suited not the child of nature. He became delirious, was baptized, and died the same evening.

"The remembrance," adds the missionary, "of my expedition to the river Empalado, though attended with so many hardships and dangers, is still most grateful to my heart; inasmuch as it proved highly fortunate to the three wood Indians, and advantageous to the Spaniards."

Fortunate! Spirit of Mercy! Fortunate! to be seduced from their free, green woods, to droop and die in a missionary village! Fortunate! to lose peace, health, contentment, and life, and to gain christian baptism! It had been fortunate for them if the tiger that tore the father to pieces, had spared neither mother nor children; for then they would have perished at once, and escaped the lingering miseries that awaited them.

I shall be told that I think and speak as one of the worldly-minded. I do so. I have no reference to heaven. When a man loses his happiness here, in this world, I consider that a positive, lamentable loss. I do not stop to calculate what are the possible chances of remuneration in another state of being; and I think we should have a wiser and a better world of it, if others would do the same. If, whenever we have clearly proved that any action results in misery here, and is therefore wrong, we are to be told, that all this misery will be made up to us in Paradise, and is not, therefore, in itself, an evil—then we may as well give up all idea of ever distinguishing good from ill, or right from wrong. What avails it, that we make the most just and accurate estimates of earthly consequences, if these are all to be falsified in heaven? If to every calculation on this side the grave, there be an after-reckoning, how can a single account be closed, or a single inference drawn? We might, in that case, as well be foolish as wise,

be blind as clear-sighted. In short, earth were not worth studying, nor her thousand phenomena worth a moment's examination; there were nothing to be termed right, for we cannot see the end; nor any thing to be pronounced wrong, because what is pain in time may bring bliss in eternity.

If this be so, it is indeed true that the wise and prudent have no advantage over their neighbours. We must, in very earnest, walk by faith and not by sight; and a dark, stumbling time we shall have of it. As for our dictionaries and vocabularies, we may as well make a great bonfire of them; for they will be of no farther use. And we may add to the pile every other book but the Bible and biblical commentaries. All other books speak of this earth; make worldly calculations; draw worldly inferences; speak of actions as, from their consequences, good or bad; make comparisons between the earthly lives of men: and all these calculations and inferences and consequences and comparisons are good for nothing; nay, worse, they mislead and deceive us.

As I said, I close the account in those regions where I can see and estimate those consequences only which I can perceive and judge; and therefore I am free to declare, that I think Dobrizhoffer, and his thousand missionary brethren, who smite on earth to save in heaven, are blind leaders of the blind, who destroy the rude virtues and simple enjoyments of the savage, without substituting in their place either true wisdom or enlightened happiness.

TRACTS
ON
REPUBLICAN GOVERNMENT
AND
NATIONAL EDUCATION.

**ADDRESSED TO THE INHABITANTS OF THE UNITED STATES
OF AMERICA.**

BY
R. D. OWEN AND FRANCES WRIGHT.

**"These are not the times in which it is safe for a nation to repose in the
lap of ignorance."—Robert Hall.**

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TRACTS

ON

GOVERNMENT AND EDUCATION.

THIS is a republic in which the voice of the people is in theory, and ought to be in practice, the director of the people's affairs. The voice of the people, that is to say, the majority of their votes, ought to decide all great measures. With a few exceptions, trifling except in the state of Virginia, all free male citizens of our country, above the age of twenty-one, have an equal voice in electing those men whose opinions and votes in the respective houses of representatives, afterwards determine the state laws, decide the state taxes, and direct the administration and appropriation of the same.

That is to say: the mass of the people legislates, or rather may legislate, *indirectly*. If those men whom they elect, do vote, not according to their own private opinion, merely because it is their own, but according to the interests and wishes of the majority of their constituents, then the people legislate through their constituents. But if the men of their choice give their votes contrary to the known interests, or to the expressed wishes, of those who have elected them as their representatives, then these men cease to be, in strictness, the representatives of the people at all. They represent no one but themselves; and, in so far as they are concerned, the government is a pure oligarchy.

I say not that this is an evil without a remedy—even perhaps an easy one; nor do I say that, in some instances, the people's representatives are not what the name implies. But it is a fact, than which scarcely any is more notorious, that many members of our legislatures do not even profess to vote with the known wishes of their electors, when these are at variance with their own; and that many more, while professing so to act, most flagrantly violate their profession.

I do not say that a man ought to be compelled or expected

to vote contrary to his conscientious conviction, even when that conviction happens to be disapproved by his electors. A certain distinguished member from the west of Pennsylvania, if I have been correctly informed, once voted in decided opposition to his received instructions; and when called to account for his conduct, at the risk of being thrown out, he boldly said, that he could only promise for the future as in the past, to consider every question attentively and candidly, to weigh duly the wishes of his constituents, but never to vote in decided opposition to his own opinions; adding, that his fellow-citizens were perfectly right to transfer their voices to the man who might more thoroughly agree with them in sentiment than he had done. His electors received his declaration with applause. As his political life had been consistent, they considered this one instance of dissent as additional proof of his integrity, and accordingly re-elected him. Now I condemn neither the member nor his constituents. In his case, I should probably have considered it my duty to follow my own private conviction of what was best;—and in theirs, to re-elect the man who was honest enough to do what he judged right, at the risk of his popularity.

But our approval or disapproval of the Pennsylvanian's conduct under these peculiar circumstances, does not affect the main question. He himself, in the given instance, might be considered as a legislator, or a guardian, or it may be a disinterested friend of the people; their *representative* he was not. He gave his opinion, not theirs; followed his wishes, not theirs: the power, which they had delegated to him, he employed to oppose what they had desired to support. The people, therefore, in so far as his decision was concerned, were not represented at all. They virtually lost, for the time, their rights of citizens, as completely as if they had been by force deprived of the elective franchise. If that which happened in this particular instance were to happen generally, the people would be as much at the mercy of their governors as are the serfs of Russia or the slaves of the Turkish dynasty.

Now, where is the remedy for evils, which, though trifling perhaps in the case of honest disinterested men, yet involve, in principle, the total loss of political liberty? Shall we expect from those whom we elect a sacrifice of their *opinions* to ours? The more honest and better portion of them may not choose to make the sacrifice. Or shall we expect from our chosen representatives a sacrifice of their *interest* to ours? The less honest and upright portion of them (and alas! how large the majority!)

will not deliberately sacrifice what they deem their own, to what they deem the public good.

Where then is the remedy? How shall the people be represented? not lorded over and governed, but *represented*? By choosing those men only whose opinions on all great points are in accordance with the opinions of their constituents; but, above all, in choosing those only whose **INTERESTS** are the same as the interest of the people.

Let us not "lead into temptation." Let us not elect men to a situation where interest tells them one thing and duty another. They *ought* not, indeed, to yield to the temptation; but that does not mend the matter; they *will* yield to it, if not in all cases, at least in the majority. An immoral situation produces, in the mass of mankind, immorality; and he whose duty and interest point different ways is immorally situated.

The real interests of the working classes are *not* the same as the apparent and immediate interests of what are called the privileged classes. Yet in five cases out of six, the representatives of the people are chosen from among lawyers, bankers, large landed proprietors, and rich merchants. In five cases out of six, then, our representatives (as they are inaccurately called) are tempted to do wrong; and if they do right, it is in spite of the temptation.

The people ought to search for those whose personal interests coincide with their own; and ought, for that reason, to choose representatives from among their own body, whenever they can find among themselves men of plain good sense, of firmness, and of practical experience. The working classes, in consequence of the injustice which has meted inordinate labour for their portion, have hitherto had but little time to improve their minds or form their manners. In consequence, there are few eloquent, and not a great many fluent speakers among them. This is to be regretted; for eloquence is a giant power in a commonwealth like this. But we must take things as we find them, and make the best of them. The manner is indeed important, but it is much less important than the matter. An indifferent speaker is better than a dishonest man. If, therefore, we cannot find eloquence and honesty combined, let us take the honesty and leave the eloquence; for, thus, if we have less brilliant debates, we shall have more useful laws.

I said that it behoved the people to choose those men for their representatives whose opinions were in accordance with their own; and I shall probably be told, that this is impossible; first because we cannot easily ascertain the general opinion of

the body of electors; and then because, even if we could, it might be difficult to find a man conscientiously holding all these, and otherwise capable of fulfilling the duties of a legislator.

But if we cannot do all, let us at least do what we can. If we cannot find representatives who will support *every* measure which their electors desire to carry, let us take those who will support the *essentials*. And, above all, let us not quarrel about the non-essentials.

There are certain great measures which are *indispensable* to the welfare of the people; there are certain master-abuses that *must* be remedied, ere common justice can accrue to the producing classes. To CARRY THESE let the people first unite. Let them elect men, not because they are of Jackson's or of Adams or of Clay's party, or of any party whatever: *but because they will support and vote for the great measures* which can alone relieve the country from its present distress.

And let the people seek until they find, what these great measures are. Having found them, let them vote, not to carry *men*, but to carry *these measures*; not to serve the interests of any political party, but to serve the great interests of themselves, the people.

They have the power in their own hands. Let them seek the knowledge and the union of purpose and of plan, which can alone make that power effective.

In despotic countries where it rests with the autocrat to command, and with his slaves to hear and to obey—in lands where the power of one is supported and the obedience of the many enforced, by lance or bayonet—it is not enough to open the people's eyes to their real situation; they must not only be enlightened, they must be armed also. For their will is but of small weight against his who has an army of mercenaries in his pay and at his beck. •

Not so in this commonwealth. Whenever the eyes of the people are opened; whenever they know what they desire to effect, and know how to unite their efforts and make effective their acknowledged power—they may carry what measures they will. **THEY HAVE THE POWER.** They may be cheated into a belief that they have it not; they may be urged on to jealousies and internal dissensions and party feuds, that waste each others strength and neutralize each others influence: and thus the people may be shorn of their rights, without perceiving how they lose them. But the power they have. They can dictate their own laws, and carry their own measures; can legislate for themselves. And if they be oppressed, if riches

and aristocracy legislate for them, and often legislate *against* them—it is the people's blindness, not their impotence, that gives their adversaries the day.

It is not the servants oppressed by their masters; it is the master deceived and tricked and governed by his servants. As American citizens, in whom is vested the elective franchise, we are our own masters. Our representatives are our servants, whom we pay to do our business; not our slaves, but our confidential hired servants. If they attend to their own business instead of attending to ours, they presume on our ignorance, and violate the duties of their situation.

Our situation, then, is good, so far as situation goes. It is right and proper that freemen should be their own masters. But that is not enough. Mere power, without knowledge, is but a useless bauble; rights unexercised are no rights at all; and a master at the mercy of his servants is no better than a slave.

So long as we cannot agree upon the instructions which we will give to our delegates; so long as we do not see these instructions carried into effect; so long as we are careless and negligent, instead of looking after our own affairs; so long are we masters at the mercy of our servants; and so long are we likely to be deceived and oppressed.

If we will change our situation, let us be up and doing. Let us choose faithful servants; not smooth-spoken rogues, nor unprofitable doers of eye service, but good and faithful servants. Let us retain them in our service so long as they remain faithful; and let us dismiss them when they seek their own emolument, instead of caring for our concerns.

But, above all, let us determine *what instruction we will give them*. If our instructions be contradictory and confused, we cannot be obeyed; we shall spoil our servants; the best of them will resign their situations, and the rest will cheat us if they can. Let us, then, enquire what are the essentials, which the people, for their own sake, ought, through their representatives, to obtain.

Here is the great difficulty. Here lies our weakness, and our oppressors strength. We know not what we would have. Some of us are tariff, some anti-tariff men; some think the country may be made a paradise by internal improvement; others that our safety can only be insured by the demolition of the banking system; some think the world would be regenerated by communities of common property; others, by labor for labor associations; others, again, by an agrarian law: some think religion only can save the country, others, that religious

influence will ruin it: one takes up one particular abuse, and one another. And the worst of it is, each deems his own plan the *only* specific for the national disease; and of course exerts all his energies to bring it into notice in preference to every other.

Here is the secret of our political degradation. Here the cause why the few can ride the many with impunity, and why the many so tamely suffer themselves to be ridden by the few. We are at variance among ourselves, and we waste in party disputes and petty dissensions, the time and the means that ought to be employed in the great work of national improvement.

If this must needs continue, our liberty was but a worthless gift.

But *must* it continue? Is there no point upon which we can *all* unite? Is there no great measure to which we can *all* subscribe? Is there none whose importance *all* will acknowledge, and by whose adoption *all* would feel themselves benefitted?

I believe there is *ONE*. And if there be, how indispensable to our prosperity as a nation, that we should see it! and, seeing, that we should unite to obtain it!

It is not a measure that, like the tariff question, will divide the North and the South; nor a local proposal, like laying a rail road, or the cutting a canal. It is not a partial reform, like the suppression of gambling among bankers; nor an untried remedy like the establishment of social communities. Nor is it a startling innovation like the equal division of property; nor even a subject for which our early prejudices may have been enlisted, like that of theology. It is a measure whose benefits all may see, from Maine to Florida, of whatever state, of whatever party, of whatever religion. *It is a NATIONAL SYSTEM OF EDUCATION.*

I would that my voice could extend over our wide republic, that I might repeat in the ears of every citizen, the advice: "Vote for those men only who will support a State Education. Cast aside party feelings. Cast aside favourite schemes. Ask not if your candidate be a mason or an anti-mason, a federalist or a democrat, a friend to national improvement, or an enemy to banking monopolies—*until* ye have first asked, 'Will he assist us to obtain for our children that best of patrimonies, whose possession would have saved us all of which we complain?' Let this be your first question. He is your friend who will honestly answer it in the affirmative; and he your enemy who will say no to it; or, saying yes, who will not hold to his word. Let this be the test of your approbation, this the condition of your support, this the one thing needful that shall

obtain your suffrage. And you will soon see your children grow up to be freemen indeed. You will see them obtain those advantages, which no nation can obtain and remain oppressed—those advantages which more than riches, more than good fortune, more than situation, more than intrigue, have hitherto given the reigning few power and privileges over the subjected many; and which, when secured to your descendants, will give them their just rank among the free citizens of the world.”

I proceed to give my reasons for proposing A SYSTEM OF EQUAL NATIONAL EDUCATION, as the *first* measure which the people should unite to carry.

In the first place, it is a measure for which all honest republicans, and all not unprincipled parents *will* unite.

It is essential that the people, if they are to effect any permanent improvement in their condition, should not be divided in opinion as to the practical objects after which they strive. I say *essential*; because the people can *not* lose their power, except by disunion. Whatever the people of this republic unite to carry, they *will* carry—against riches, against patronage, against sophistry, against intrigue—against every power which sharp wits, rendered yet sharper by the sense of personal interest, can bring in array to oppose them. But let discord enter the popular fortress, and there is no longer either safety or power. One quarrel within the walls is worse than a thousand enemies without. “A house divided against itself,” says an ancient writer, “can not stand.” And truly and wisely was it said.

This is no petty question of expediency. It is that which will decide *every thing*. Tell me whether the people will succeed in uniting their voices to carry *any* measure, and I will tell you whether the effort will be successful. Inform me that their crafty opponents will be able to sow dissension among the people’s ranks; and, though no prophet, I will predict the people’s discomfiture.

What possibility is there, that the mass of our citizens should be divided on this question of national education? Who, except those who seek to make money and win places by educational inequality, will feel their interest opposed? Who, among the people, that has a child of his own, will not feel his personal interest immediately promoted? What parent is there so lost alike to duty and affection, or so degraded by vitiating habits, that he feels not the desire to see his children saved from the pit into which he has fallen.

Powerful—very powerful is the parental feeling. Even in

its excess we may recognise its power. Even when it destroys the tranquility of the parent, and alas! the welfare of the child, we may see how potent and engrossing its influence. And would it not be beneficial as powerful, were it but wisely directed.

This measure, then, is one which is calculated to unite the zealous suffrages of all upright citizens, and all righteous parents, whatever their sect, their party, or their profession. It contains, then, in itself, the earnest of its own success.

But secondly, it is not only easily attainable, but omnipotent when attained.

Look around upon our country, and estimate, if you can, the extent of its vices, and its miseries. You will find them, not of one place, nor of one character, nor of partial influence. You will find them every where. Ride along our highways, and every third house you pass shall be a tavern or a gin-shop. Pass through our streets, and in one you will see vanity of dress, pride of wealth, and pompousness of luxury, in the next, half-naked wretchedness, and brutalizing excesses. Enter our courts of law, and see the hatred, and hear the bickerings that support in affluence the judge and the barrister. Visit our orthodox temples of religion, and calculate the intolerance they contain and the hypocrisy they engender. Watch the commercial speculations that pour thousands into the already overflowing coffers of some rich merchant or banker, and ruin his less fortunate or more scrupulous neighbour, who drags along with him, perhaps in his bankruptcy, hundreds of honest labourers, and hard working mechanics. Or, inquire in the details of domestic life, and contemplate the jealous struggle of the poor to emulate the rich, and the eager endeavour of all to barter tranquil comfort for a little higher rank and a little more fashionable standing than the world is willing to accord them. See one half of society, the slaves of etiquette, and the other the victims of excessive labour. Observe how uniformly the hardest labour is made the least productive; and how the reward of an occupation increases almost in the same ratio with its inutility. Mark how one class is doomed to toil for bread, and another privileged to wanton in luxurious idleness. Observe how poor and dependent are the producers, and how rich and powerful the consumers of wealth. And ask yourselves, how many men and women ye have found in the course of your lives—among the rich or the poor, the oppressors or the oppressed—truly honest, truly consistent, truly independent, or truly happy in their generation.

How shall a mass of abuses like these be remedied by piecemeal? How shall they be remedied *at all*, if we reach not the seat of the disease—the human heart? What avails it that our present monopolies are destroyed, if the ignorance remain that first permitted and may again be cajoled to permit them? What would it profit us that all pecuniary inequality ceased in a moment, if the ignorance remain that first produced, and would soon reproduce it. How should we be advantaged by razing to the ground our banks, our law courts, and our gin-shops, if the spirit of speculation, of quarrelling, and of drunkenness, which at first erected, were still there to rebuild them? In a word, how shall the abuses that mar all the beauty of our national institutions, the vices that stain the fame of our national character, and the miseries that depress or destroy our national happiness—how shall these be removed, but only by an equal, national, intellectual and practical education for all the young citizens of our republic?

We have had enough of declarations; let us have realities. We have said we are free and equal; let us become so. It needs not the chain or the manacle to constitute the slave. There is a slavery beyond that of fetters and dungeons—the slavery that bends not the body only, but the mind, to oppression; that puts man's reason in irons, and shuts out from his reach common sense and practical knowledge. This is the oppression we must destroy; and in the human mind, where it dwells and reigns, there we must destroy it.

Had but equal education been spread over the nations of modern Europe, how altered should we read the annals of the dark middle ages. Where did the feudal barons find their power to enslave, if not in the cowed spirit and loyal ignorance of their degraded vassals? How did the Catholic clergy, that proud spiritual aristocracy, that set its sandaled feet on the necks of kings, and in its robes of sackcloth, entered unushered the cabinets of the masters of the world—how did these proud pretenders to holy humility, obtain their despotic sway? Was it not because science had retreated to the cell of the monk, and opened her treasures only within the walls of the monastery? Could feudal or spiritual tyranny have lasted for one year beyond the time that all serfs and all catholics had been taught to find in real knowledge at once their safety, their freedom, and their happiness.

Let us leave the branches then, and strike at the root. They will wither and die of themselves, when the sources are cut off whence they have derived their nourishment. My second

reason, therefore, for proposing equal national education as the first measure of reform, is because it is a remedy, and the only remedy commensurate with the abuses we purpose to remove.

There are other reasons, though of less weight than those I have already adduced, why we may regard a state education as the measure which it behoves the people, as they value their own happiness and their children's independence, first to unite to carry.

However omnipotent that measure may be, in revolutionizing the character and remodelling all the institutions of society, it is less startling and obnoxious, even to the most orthodox defenders of the things and the powers that be, than are many other far less effective measures. Propose to abolish all banking charters; and, though this could produce but a trifling benefit compared to those resulting from national education, yet while effecting much less, it could irritate much more. Propose an immediate equalization of property; and though you could have no security that in a single year from the date of that equalization, there would not be rich and poor, oppressors and oppressed, as at present, yet this partial and ineffective reform would create a hundred enemies and opposers, for one that is created against a universal reform by means of education. So, in medicine, are the gentlest remedies often the most efficacious, and come to us doubly recommended, at once by their immediate and by their ultimate effects.

I shall perhaps be told, that the relief afforded to suffering industry by means of instruction to the coming generation, is but prospective and afar off; and that, while promising much in the future, it affords no alleviation for the present. But this objection is surely invalid. If a system of National Education be established, providing at once for the instruction and maintenance of all the children of the republic, and the expences be defrayed by means of a property tax, and in addition, perhaps, as suggested by my co-editor, in her lecture on Existing Evils, by a light tax on each parent—if, I say, such a system of education and support were carried for the children of *all*, how would the miseries and difficulties of poor families be instantly lightened or removed! When is the sting of poverty the sharpest, if it be not when a father or a mother looks on the sufferings of their offspring—when they see them neglected in body and mind, without power of remedy—and bitterly anticipate for them future hardships and future degradation? Let those poor and hard worked widows of Philadelphia, whom an iniquitous system of trade has doomed to exist and support their helpless

children on sixteen dollars a year, or to brave infamy and punishment for a small additional pittance—let them reply.

How would it lighten not the expences only, but the cares and the sorrows of indigent parents, to know that, whatever they themselves might endure, their children, safe under the parental guardianship of the nation, were secure from the privations of poverty, and participating in the same advantages, mental, moral, and physical, as the wealthiest children in the land!

Where is, at this moment, the great difficulty to the working classes in obtaining just laws, such as shall defend their rights and advance their interest? Their difficulty may be traced to the fact that they can hardly find suitable representatives. And why not find them? Because men in other ranks of life have interests opposed to those of the working man, and men in his own rank have not the educational advantages that enable them easily to compete with the sophistry of the learned student, or the eloquence of the classic scholar. And will not this difficulty remain, until a National Education remove it? Had equal instruction been accorded in the last generation to the child of the mechanic as of the president, how could there now exist the slightest difficulty in selecting from among the producers of all wealth intelligent representatives of their own class—men who, taken from among the people, would legislate for the people; and who, uniting common sense to literary acquirements, and practical knowledge to theoretical refinement, would act with the plain dealing of an honest republican, think with the enlarged and liberal views of a disciple of science, and speak with the eloquent perspicuity of a man of letters. Thus are our immediate difficulties, equally with all the thousand evils which ignorance has ever produced, to be traced to the carelessness of mankind in neglecting to train up children when young, in the way they should go, that, when they are old, they may not depart from it.

Lastly, National Education is a measure involving no dangerous revolution to rouse the passions, and perhaps to blind the judgment, of mankind. It presupposes no violent change in the structure of society. It is like the silent flowing of the rising tide, not like the impetuous whirl of the engulfing storm. Even if, by mismanagement in its details, it might fail at first to effect all the good we anticipate, experience would soon correct these minor errors: so that with much and increasing good in prospect, there is neither danger to be encountered, nor loss to be incurred.

"Lycurgus," says Plutarch, "resolved the whole business of legislation into the bringing up of youth." When our legislators shall have learnt wisdom from the Spartan, they will acquire, as he acquired, the power of remoulding the national character. At present they do not possess it. They can punish, but they have yet to learn how to prevent. They have jails and penitentiaries, handcuffs and treadmills, lawyers and constables, solemn oaths and penal codes; they have yet to learn that these form not men to virtue, though they often make them hypocrites in vice. They have yet to learn the impotence of fear, and the omnipotence of reason.

Let our representatives learn all this, or let us change our representatives. He who knows not the reforming power of National Education, is unqualified to sit in the councils of a nation: and he who knows its power, yet seeks to withhold its benefits from the humblest of his fellow-citizens, still less deserves their confidence or their suffrages.

I have stated the reasons that induce me to regard a State Education as the first object to obtain which the people should combine their exertions and unite their votes. If these reasons be good, let the people awake to action. As they value the noble institutions of America, as they would save their country from the convulsions of a bloody revolution, as they would reform the crying abuses of inequality, as they would check the frightful enormities of vice, as they would build up virtue in the human heart, cherish kindness in the human bosom, and cultivate intelligence in the human mind—in a word, as they value their own and their children's enduring welfare, let them awake to action. Let them *unite* for action. The struggle is for no paltry prize; it is for the reality of those blessings which were declared ours half a century ago. This is the time and this the country for such a struggle. Soon may it commence, and speedily as happily may it terminate!

R. D. OWEN.

PLAN OF NATIONAL EDUCATION.

THE industrious classes have been called the bone and marrow of the nation; but they are in fact the nation itself. The fruits of their industry are the nation's wealth; their moral integrity and physical health is the nation's strength; their ease and independence is the nation's prosperity; their intellectual intelligence is the nation's hope. Where the producing labourer and useful artisan eat well, sleep well, live comfortably, think correctly, speak fearlessly, and act uprightly, the nation is happy, free, and wise. Has such a nation ever been? No. Can such a nation ever be? Answer, men of industry of the United States! If such *can* be, it is here. If such *is* to be, it must be your work

Here the people govern; and *you* are the people.

And you are becoming apprized of this. You are learning your power. In New-York, in Philadelphia, in Boston, in Baltimore, you have looked round and distinguished that all is not well. In Philadelphia you have tried your strength; in New-York you have proved it. In New-York, six thousand votes have appeared at once in the ballot box, on which you had written REFORM.

This has been, indeed, a show of strength, and a sign of determination. As such it has been hailed far and wide, by every friend of human improvement. Through the counties of this powerful state, every mind looks to the metropolis. There *they* have touched the lever who alone can move it. The people have aroused themselves where they are the strongest—in the cities. There at length they have said, "We have the power, and we will use it." Yes, men of industry! you have the power; and it is now with you wisely to steer the vessel of the state into safe harbour, or rashly to peril it in the deeps and shallows of anarchy and stormy contention.

Much, I will not say *all*, depends on your first move. I will not say *all*, because I believe that, even in spite of errors

and blunders, the national institutions, and the good sense which they, in spite of all countervailing influences, have sufficed to generate, would lead you right at last. But *much* depends upon your first move. The honour of the cause depends upon it; the honour of the nation in the eyes of the world depends upon it; the honour of the nation, and your own honour in your own eyes depend upon it. Move then warily. Take one step at a time, and let that step be always such as you can keep. He who draws back is always weakened; and he who hurries forward with blind speed, must always draw back or stumble. Touch *skilfully* as many minor abuses as circumstances and your own knowledge may permit. Check the banks; limit or repeal charters; tax church property; investigate the nature of its tenure; secure the more immediate interests of the working classes, by procuring the legal acknowledgment of their claims where now they are unheard;—all this will be important, and well, and of immediate utility, if done wisely. But as respects great measures (and all such as above enumerated, are but trifling; are but the lopping off of branches, not the severing of the root)—as respects great measures, attempt but one at a time; speak of but one at a time; if possible, think of but one at a time. Let one, and one *great measure*, alone engross for a long season, your thoughts and unite your efforts. Recall your own youth, and you will understand what that measure ought to be. Look at your children, and you can never forget it. Examine yourselves—weigh your own deficiencies, and you will appreciate all its importance, and its omnipotence.

Pledge yourselves, then, men of industry! pledge yourselves, minds, hearts, and votes, to that one measure—that saving, that regenerating, that omnipotent measure. That one measure, by which alone childhood may find sure protection; by which alone youth may be made wise, industrious, moral, and happy; by which alone the citizens of this land may be made, in very deed, *free and equal*. That measure—you know it. IT IS NATIONAL, RATIONAL, REPUBLICAN EDUCATION; FREE FOR ALL AT THE EXPENSE OF ALL; CONDUCTED UNDER THE GUARDIANSHIP OF THE STATE, AT THE EXPENSE OF THE STATE, AND FOR THE HONOUR, THE HAPPINESS, THE VIRTUE, THE SALVATION OF THE STATE.

Until equality be planted in the mind, in the habits, in the manners, in the feelings, think not it can ever be in the condition. Equalize fortunes at this hour, and knavery in one year would have beggared honesty; improvidence would have dissipated its possessions; credulous simplicity would have yielded

all to the crafty hypocrite; error would still deceive ignorance, and a ready tongue and a forward spirit, would still banish modest worth to the shade.

But it is not enough to forbear from rash and futile measures; they should not be talked about. Hot heads and hasty spirits will indeed urge to false movements, seek to outstrip time and circumstance, and strain to make effects precede their preparing causes. But a self-respecting people will check the zeal of imprudence, and the intemperate haste of unreasoning or false-reckoning inexperience. They will begin well, that they may end well; they will move slowly and firmly, that they may move unitedly and surely; they will begin with what touches the interests, and may convince the understandings of the great body of the nation, that opposition may be weak and co-operation strong. They will unite on that measure without which every other must be ineffectual, and which must be preparatory to every reform. They will unite on that measure, which, in principle, is so righteous, that the hypocrite dare not openly slander it; so constitutional, that the crooked politician dare not openly oppose it; so universally beneficial, that not one honest man can lift his voice against it.

Unite, then, men of industry! on this measure, and you disarm your enemies; unite on this measure, and all the sound part of the population are your friends. The vote of every righteous parent and every honest man will drop into your ballot box; and your ticket shall carry at the first general struggle, not in your city only, but throughout your state.

Take now then betimes your stand, men of industry! Organize yourselves, prepare your minds, strengthen your numbers, turn a deaf ear to the clamour of enemies; defeat by order, and union, and steady perseverance, the tricks of roguery. Fix your eyes upon the great object—*the salvation and regeneration of human kind, by means of the rational education and protection of youth.* Study this great object in all its bearings; follow it out in all its consequences and effects; digest the means by which it may be secured; let it engage your thoughts and supply your conversations; speak of it at home and abroad; win to it the attention of your wives and of your children themselves; interest all you love, and all you know, and, if possible, all with whom you come in contact, in weighing its advantages, and advancing its execution!

Bear in mind, men of industry! that *you are the people*; and that here, by acknowledged right and acknowledged law, *the people govern.* Govern then for yourselves and your children,

and for the nation of which you now form the hands, and the feet, and the trunk, and of which you must form *the head* before the head can be in union with the body it regulates. Govern as fathers as well as citizens, as citizens as well as fathers. Bear in mind that the stay and prop of liberty is knowledge; that the basis of just government is rational education, and, that the life of a republic is equal education. Lay then the true foundation of practical republicanism. Bind all your efforts to the one great measure of a uniform plan of education for all the children and youth of your several states; and let that plan be in perfect unison with the nature of man, the nature of things, and with the declaration of your country—*all men are free and equal*.

THE measure I am about to suggest, whenever adopted, will, in the outset, alleviate those popular distresses whose poignancy and rapid increase weigh on the heart of philanthropy, and crush the best hopes of enlightened patriotism. It must further, when carried into full effect, work the radical cure of every disease which now afflicts the body politic, and build up for this nation a sound constitution, embracing at once, public prosperity, individual integrity, and universal happiness.

This measure, my friends, has been long present to my mind as befitting the adoption of the American people; as alone calculated to form an enlightened, a virtuous, and a happy community; as alone capable of supplying a remedy to the evils under which we groan; as alone commensurate with the interests of the human family, and consistent with the political institutions of this great confederated republic.

I had occasion formerly to observe, in allusion to the efforts already made, and yet making, in the cause of popular instruction, more or less throughout the Union, that as yet, the true principle has not been hit, and that until it be hit, all reform must be slow and inefficient.

The noble example of New-England has been imitated by other states, until all not possessed of common schools blush for the popular remissness. But, after all, how can *common schools*, under their best form, and in fullest supply, effect even the purpose which they have in view.

The object proposed by common schools (if I rightly understand it) is to impart to the whole population those means for

the acquirement of knowledge which are in common use: reading and writing. To these are added arithmetic, and, occasionally, perhaps, some imperfect lessons in the simpler sciences. But, I would ask, supposing these institutions should even be made to embrace all the branches of intellectual knowledge, and thus, science offered gratis to all the children of the land, how are the children of the very class, for whom we suppose the schools instituted, to be supplied with food and raiment, or instructed in the ~~grade~~ necessary to their future subsistence, while they are following these studies? How are they, I ask, to be fed and clothed, when, as all facts show, the labour of the parents is often insufficient for their own sustenance, and, almost universally, inadequate to the provision of the family without the united efforts of all its members? In your manufacturing districts you have children worked for twelve hours a day; and, in the rapid and certain progress of the existing system, you will soon have them, as in England, *worked to death*, and yet unable, through the period of their miserable existence, to earn a pittance sufficient to satisfy the cravings of hunger. At this present time, what leisure or what spirit, think you, have the children of the miserable widows of Philadelphia, realizing, according to the most favourable estimate of your city and county committee, sixteen dollars per annum, for food and clothing? What leisure or what spirit may their children find for visiting a school, although the same should be open to them from sunrise to sunset? Or what leisure have usually the children of your most thriving mechanics, after their strength is sufficiently developed to spin, sew, weave, or wield a tool? It seems to me, my friends, that to build school houses now-a-days is something like building churches. When you have them, you need some measure to ensure their being occupied.

I hasten to the rapid developement of the system of instruction and protection which has occurred to me as capable, and alone capable, of opening the door to universal reform.

In lieu of common schools, high schools, colleges, seminaries, houses of refuge, or any other juvenile institution, instructional or protective, let the state legislatures be directed (after laying off the whole in townships or hundreds) to organize, at suitable distances, and in convenient and healthy situations, establishments for the general reception of all the children resident within the said school district. These establishments to be devoted, severally, to children between a certain age. Say, the first to infants between two and four, or two and six, according

to the density of the population, and such other local circumstances as might render a greater or less number of establishments necessary or practicable. The next to receive children from four to eight, or six to twelve years. The next from twelve to sixteen, or to an older age if found desirable. Each establishment to be furnished with instructors in every branch of knowledge, intellectual and operative, with all the apparatus, land, and conveniences necessary for the best developement of all knowledge; the same, whether operative or intellectual, being always calculated to the age and strength of the pupils.

To obviate, in the commencement, every evil result possible from the first mixture of a young population, so variously raised in error or neglect, a due separation should be made in each establishment; by which means those entering with bad habits would be kept apart from the others until corrected. How rapidly reform may be effected on the plastic disposition of childhood, has been sufficiently proved in your houses of refuge, more especially when such establishments have been under *liberal* superintendence, as was formerly the case in New-York. Under their orthodox directors, those asylums of youth have been converted into jails.

It will be understood, that, in the proposed establishments, the children would pass from one to the other in regular succession, and that the parents, who would necessarily be resident in their close neighbourhood, could visit the children at suitable hours, but, in no case, interfere with or interrupt the rules of the institution.

In the older establishments, the well directed and well protected labour of the pupil would, in time, suffice for, and then exceed, their own support; when the surplus might be devoted to the maintenance of the infant establishments.

In the beginning, and until all debt was cleared off, and so long as the same should be found favourable to the promotion of these best palladiums of a nation's happiness, a double tax might be at once expedient and politic.

First, a moderate tax per head for every child, to be laid upon its parents conjointly, or divided between them, due attention being always paid to the varying strength of the two sexes, and to the undue depreciation which now rests on female labour. The more effectually to correct the latter injustice, as well as to consult the convenience of the industrious classes generally, this parental tax might be rendered payable either in money, or in labour, produce, or domestic manufactures, and should be continued for each child until the age when juvenile labour should be found, on the average, equivalent to the educa-

tional expences, which, I have reason to believe, would be at twelve years.

The first tax on parents to embrace equally the whole population; as, however moderate, it would inculcate a certain forethought in all the human family; more especially where it is most wanted—in young persons, who before they assumed the responsibility of parents, would estimate their fitness to meet it.

The second tax to be on property, increasing in per centage with the wealth of the individual. In this manner I conceive the rich would contribute, according to their riches, to the relief of the poor, and to the support of the state, by raising up its best bulwark—an enlightened and united generation.

Preparatory to, or connected with, such measures, a registry should be opened by the state, with offices through all the townships, where on the birth of every child, or within a certain time appointed, the same should be entered, together with the names of its parents. When two years old, the parental tax should be payable, and the juvenile institution open for the child's reception; from which time forward it would be under the protective care and guardianship of the state, while it need never be removed from the daily, weekly, or frequent inspection of the parents.

Orphans of course, would find here an open asylum. If possessed of property, a contribution would be paid from its revenue to the common educational fund; if unprovided, they would be sustained out of the same.

In these nurseries of a free nation, no inequality must be allowed to enter. Fed at a common board; clothed in a common garb, uniting neatness with simplicity and convenience; raised in the exercise of common duties, in the acquirement of the same knowledge and practise of the same industry, varied only according to individual taste and capabilities; in the exercise of the same virtues, in the enjoyment of the same pleasures; in the study of the same nature; in pursuit of the same object—their own and each other's happiness—say! would not such a race, when arrived at manhood and womanhood work out the reform of society—perfect the free institutions of America?

FRANCES WRIGHT.

EDUCATION IN NEW ENGLAND.

BY PROFESSOR TICKNOR, OF BOSTON.

THE system of universal education has now, therefore, become, to a remarkable degree, the basis of the popular character which marks the two millions of people in New England. The laws, indeed, differ in the six states, and have been altered in each, from time to time, since their first enactment; but all the states have laws on the subject; the leading principles are the same in all of them; and the modes of applying them, and the results obtained, are not materially different. Indeed, in almost every part of these six states, whatever may be the injunctions of the law, the popular demand for education is so much greater, that the legal requisitions are generally or constantly exceeded. The most striking instance of this is, perhaps to be found in the city of Boston, where the requisitions of the law could be fulfilled by an expenditure of three thousand dollars annually, but where from sixty to seventy thousand are every year applied to the purpose. And yet multitudes of the poor and small towns in the interior show no less zeal on the subject, and, in proportion to their means, make no less exertion. The mode in which this system of popular education is carried into effect is perfectly simple, and is one principal cause of its practical efficiency. The New England states are all divided into territorial communities called *towns*, which have corporate privileges and duties, and whose affairs are managed by a sort of committee annually chosen by the inhabitants called *selectmen*. These towns are of unequal size; but in the agricultural portions of the country, which contain four-fifths of the people, they are generally five or six square miles; and upon them, in their corporate capacity, rests the duty of making provision for the support of free schools. This duty is fulfilled by them, in the first place, by voting, at a meeting of all the taxable male inhabitants over twenty one years old, a tax on property of all kinds to support schools for the current year, always as large as the law requires, and often larger; or, if this is neglected by any town, it is so surely complained of to the grand jury by those dissatisfied inhabitants, who want education for their children, that instances of such neglect are almost unknown. The next thing is to spend wisely and effectually the money thus raised. In all but the smallest towns, one school, at least, is kept

through the whole year, in which Latin, Greek, the lower branches of mathematics, and whatever goes to constitute a common English education in reading, writing, geography, history, &c. are taught under the immediate superintendence of the selectmen, or of a special committee appointed for the purpose. This, however, would not be carrying education near enough to the doors of the people, in agricultural districts, to enable them fully to avail themselves of it, especially the poorer classes and the younger children. To meet this difficulty, all the towns are divided into districts, varying in number, in each town, from four to twelve, or even more, according to its necessities and convenience. Each district has its district school committee, and receives a part of the tax imposed for education; sometimes in proportion to the population of the district, but oftener to the number of children to be educated. The Committee of the district determine where the school shall be kept, select its teacher, choose the books that shall be used, or delegate that power to the instructor, and, in short, are responsible in all particulars, for the faithful fulfillment of the trust committed to them; the general system being that a school is kept in each district during the long winter months, when the children of the farmers are unoccupied, by a male teacher, capable of instructing in reading, writing, arithmetic, English grammar, geography, and history; while in the same school-house, during the summer months, schools are kept by women, to instruct the smaller children in knowledge even more elementary. In this way, for the population of New England, consisting of two millions of souls, not less than from ten to twelve thousand free schools are open every year, or, on an average, one school to every two hundred souls—a proportion undoubtedly quite sufficient, and larger than would be necessary, if the population were not in many parts very much dispersed.*

* On this point no one has spoken with more power than Mr. Webster, who, alluding, in public debate, to the free schools, where he himself received his earliest training, said,—“In this particular, New England may be allowed to claim, I think, a merit of a peculiar character. She early adopted, and has constantly maintained the principle, that it is the undoubted right, and the bounden duty of government, to provide for the instruction of all youth. That which is elsewhere left to chance, or to charity, we secure by law. For the purpose of public instruction, we hold every man subject to taxation in proportion

to his property; and we look not to the question whether he himself have, or have not, children to be benefitted by the education for which he pays. We regard it as a wise and liberal system of police, by which property, and life, and the peace of society, are secured. We seek to prevent, in some measure, the extension of the penal code, by inspiring a salutary and conservative principle of virtue and of knowledge in an early age. We hope to excite a feeling of respectability, and a sense of character, by enlarging the capacity, and increasing the sphere of intellectual enjoyment. By general instruction, we seek, as far as possible, to purify the whole moral atmosphere, to keep good sentiments uppermost, and to turn the strong current of feeling and opinion, as well as the censures of the law, and the denunciations of religion, against immorality and crime. We hope for a security, beyond the law, and above the law, in the prevalence of enlightened and well-principled moral sentiment. We hope to continue and prolong the time, when, in the villages and farm houses of New England, there may be undisturbed sleep within unbarred doors. And, knowing that our government rests directly on the public will, that we may preserve it, we endeavour to give a safe and proper direction to that public will. We do not, indeed, expect all men to be philosophers or statesmen; but we confidently trust, and our expectation of the duration of government rests on that trust, that, by the diffusion of general knowledge and good and virtuous sentiments, the political fabric may be secure, as well against open violence and overthrow, as against the slow but sure undermining of licentiousness."

(*Journal of Debates in the Convention to revise the Constitution of Massachusetts*, 1821, page 245.)

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